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DANGER GIRL AND BEYOND
J. SCOTT CAMPBELL

Coming Soon to the Pages of **SKETCH MAGAZINE**

JAY ANACLETO

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER...

What to say...

Do we need to say anything...?

The great creators that participate in each issue of *Sketch* have committed to put out the best industrial trade publication possible.

Have we done so? That's up to you to determine. But I believe by being midway in our third year of publication, *Sketch* has shown that we're doing something right.

What to say...

With industry figures like Neil Gaiman, Frank Cho, Jan Duursema, and Brian Bendis chronicled in just the past few issues and with upcoming *Sketch* headliners including names like Alex Ross, Alan Moore, Jay Anacleto and Joe Jusko, the future status of the *Sketch* library looks brighter then ever. I hope your personal library is brighter for including us.

What does that say...

It says that the top professionals working in our field believe in the cause behind *Sketch Magazine.*

With that in mind, are you taking advantage of the information that these creators are willing to share, putting it to use on paper and computer screens? Are you putting your best foot forward to improve yourself everyday, and share the creative energy with the entire comic industry? Write, draw, ink, color, and publish. We all have something to tell, something to achieve, and something that must be shared. I hope you're joining in, and I sincerely hope we've been a help to you in your efforts.

Hmmm... I did have something to say after all...

This issue could certainly not have been accomplished without the help of our featured creator J. Scott Campbell. He truly joined in the spirit, graciously affording us a terrific amount of his valuable time for an incredible interview, and knocking us out by supplying a generous amount of his delicious trademark eye-candy. Even with the most extensive J. Scott interview in print I feel that we have barely tapped the sensational abilities of Campbell, and I hope he'll come back to *Sketch* in the near future. And - needless to say - each issue would not be complete without the work of the crew of established creators that continues to share their experiences and knowledge with us each issue.

Thanks to all...and now, I've said enough...Enjoy!

take care,
Bob Hickey

Inside

Grating Expectorations

Happy summer, creative Brothers and Sisters! The swelter is here, and if you're not working in air-conditioned icy comfort, don't forget to put a little baby powder on your arm to keep it from sticking to your drawing board and smudging up that pencil or ink work.

With the summer con season and all its fanfare, gossip, politicking and new project launches in full heat; I find it refreshing to catch the most positive waves of industry buzz and excitement since *Sketch* began. I always look forward to asking creators the same questions that form my personal interest in this magazine: "Why do you do what you do? What attracts you to it?" (our great contributors always answer the "how"). But most of all, like everyone else that loves this medium, summer means getting caught up in the sheer fan boy excitement and anticipation of great looking new releases: Alan Davis' *Killraven*, Ladronn's *Hip Flask*, Art Adams' *Kamandi*! And that's just the comics themselves – what about all the toy and model related merchandise available these days, starting with WizKids' great sculpts of Marvel and DC characters? I don't care about the games – I want those too-cool WizKids' comic figures! Fun!

Summer allows me the fun of falling comfortably into the nostalgia bandwagon with so many others, remembering the heady anticipation of new titles in summers now long past. In those Elder Days, I worshipped at the monolithic comic god of a giant twin spinner rack, standing mysterious and majestic in a half-lit dusty corner of a mom and pop store, its incense the tantalizing odor of chemicals and food additives you just can't put into edible consumables in these enlightened times. In those dark, pre-web times when twelve and twenty-cent comics ruled the earth, new release anticipation was built over a simple cover repo and an accompanying blurb – "Coming!", "Next Month!", or the often misleading "Now On Sale!", instead of extended previews and candy-coated super-hype on a site. In those days the comic god required more work for its blessings; you often had to earnestly hunt and search for that new release, never quite sure of when it would magically appear and fearful of missing it. Gleefully half-crazed from the quest, my sacrifice of hard-earned coin might finally be acknowledged with a reward of terrific entertainment, like a rare but always truly brilliant Steranko cover on some obscure Marvel title, or King Kirby's original *Last Boy On Earth*. Great fun, to say the least.

While every season means business in the comic industry – producing, obtaining, marketing, or planning work – the summer season always seems to stress this fun and enjoyment of the medium. And while *Sketch* always has its eye on both the bristol board and the business form, we want to celebrate as well –and what better top-flight talent to do so with than the incredible J. Scott Campbell, whose work seems to scream "Fun!" from every cover and page he's created?

Our small review of his *Danger Girl Sketchbook* in a previous ish could not do it justice, and it's a great example of Scott at the peak of his form. It's filled with sketches (natch!), character comps and storyboards, all covered with the kind of behind-the-scenes production notes you don't ordinarily get to see. Whether a fan of Scott's, or another artist that likes to see how "the other guy" really thinks and works, this is a book to put on your "must find" con list. After reading his refreshingly open and revealing comments this issue, you'll want to go back and examine Scott's art over again and again with a fresh eye.

Most famous for his female characters, done with a command of expression and gesture in his smooth, modern, eye-catching style, his delightful and engaging girls easily rise to the top of the "sexy women" school of artists. His fun-filled and eye-winking romps, filled with genuine Bondesque pacing, innocent naughtiness, effervescent charm and jokey references, work on a level apparently unattainable to the one-note ham-handedness or downright salaciousness of the many good (or bad) girl creators out there. Many of their characters have come and gone quickly, unable to catch the spirit of fun or parody Scott seems to capture effortlessly. From *Vampirella* to *Spider-Man*, his always-in-demand covers sell books. We at *Sketch* can't wait for *Thundercats* a la Campbell! Thanks, Scott, for all your time and help in making this issue of *Sketch* sizzle.

Speaking of always-in-demand and constantly working professionals, Chuck Dixon keeps our heat going with another great column. This never-miss-a-deadline writing deadshot is well known in the industry as a pro's pro, and his funny, direct columns are always filled with tips, tricks, and insights that scripters should be studying, as well as reinforcing his reputation in his metier.

Accompanying Chuck's article this month are Sigilicious sketches by his CrossGen collaborator Scot Eaton. Though the original artists and their styles are obviously outstanding, the racks are filled with imitators – are you growing tired of Manga mimicry, Timm tracings, and awesomely awful Kirby aping? Ready for some solid story telling and rendering? Check Scot out, as Mr. Eaton is rapidly becoming known as one of the best draftsmen in the biz. This guy can draw! He does some of the nicest, most convincing hands around – not to mention gorgeous women and detailed, awesome spectacles, all on a monthly schedule! In an off-kilter market filled with off-color books, CrossGen exhibits handsomely rendered titles produced on a regular, dependable basis. Chuck and Scot are excellent examples of the kind of pro it takes to output this type of quality material.

Rounding out this issue's summer frolic is our usual gang of *Sketch* pros, among them: Tom Bierbaum with another thought provoker, Mitch Byrd with another eye pleaser, and Pat Quinn with a perspective...headache inducer.

Well...summer can't be *all* fun.

Enjoy your season...and keep *Sketch*ing.

F

Comic books are a **fun medium**! Blue Line Productions' goals are aimed toward enhancing this art form - and others – through knowledge and quality art supplies. We try hard to make certain that you, the reader, have the comic book technique information you require for your personal enjoyment of this great field.

Jeff Scott Campbell is an extraordinarily gifted artist and creator. From almost the moment he entered the professional arena, it was obvious that here was an artist who, by combining crack draftsmanship with a highly distinctive style, was sure to make his mark in the business. Just ask Jim Lee, one of the architects of the Image revolution and the founder of WildStorm studios, who personally asked a young Campbell — then barely a year out of high school — if he'd be interested in moving to Southern California and joining his studio. Not one to pass up a good opportunity, Jeff accepted Jim's invitation and quickly found himself working alongside Lee, Joe Chiodo, and a host of other high-powered talented folks. Soon after that, Campbell found himself penciling *Gen 13*, which quickly became one of the biggest books of the nineties. Then Lee asked his young star if he had any ideas for a creator owned book. And it turned out that Jeff did, indeed, have a few notions on that subject.

The result was *Danger Girl*, a phenomenon whose popularity seems as indefatigable as that ubiquitous drumming bunny on TV. In spite of long delays caused by extremes of ill-health, including a repeatedly collapsed lung, the enduring popularity of that kinetic series, which is currently on hiatus, only served to catapult Campbell into the most rarefied heights of acclaim in the eyes of fans and his fellow pros alike, and spawned a legion of imitators.

More recently he's been doing covers for various titles, including *Amazing Spider-Man* and *GI Joe*, drawing an occasional short tale (such as the interiors of *Thundercats #0*), and quietly working on his next, still unnamed, top secret creator owned project. Oh, and in his spare time he's diligently working on redefining his art and, in the process, himself.

All of which means, for those not paying attention, that Jeff Campbell is still...

A Dangerously Talented Artist
J. Scott Campbell on *Danger Girl* and Beyond

an interview conducted by Bill Baker

Battle of the Planets cover

and [began thinking in] that sort of direction. And then, of course, I was a really, *really* big fan of movies when I was a kid. That, I'm sure, really shaped a lot of the kind of the imagery and stuff that I respond to, and what I kind of emulate in my work. I was a big, *big* fan, of course, of Saturday morning cartoons and that type of thing. [Laughter] So all these things, I'm sure, shaped the kind of level of creativity that I put into my work.

Sketch: Were there any Saturday morning cartoons that you remember really enjoying in particular?

Jeff: Yeah, definitely. One of the earliest cartoons I remember watching vigorously was — it wasn't really so much of a Saturday morning cartoon, but for me it was on in the early morning hours — I used to always call it *G Force*, but now it's referred to, of course, as *Battle of the Planets*. But, to me, it'll always be *G Force*. [Laughter] When I was growing up, that's what I remember it as being called. I loved that cartoon.

I also enjoyed *Super Friends*, and things of that nature. Pretty much a lot of the action-adventure ones. I loved *Johnny Quest*. Another one I was really into when I was a kid was *Thundarr the Barbarian*. [General laughter.]

Sketch: Oh, yeah. That's a classic!

Jeff: Yeah. Of course, in my later years now, I've really grown to appreciate Alex Toth and all the types of design work he did in those. The really brilliant designs he put into a lot of those cartoons that, at the time, I just thought they looked cool, and had no real idea who was behind the work. [Laughter] So that's been real nice to kind of discover that element.

And then in my later years I liked a lot of the afternoon shows, such as *Thundercats, Transformers, G. I. Joe.* Pretty much anything that was tied in to an action figure line. But I really did enjoy the artwork and the ideas behind them. A lot of the cartoons of that generation, they're coming back into favor now as a kind of retro kind of thing or something like that. At the time I know they were heavily bad mouthed for being basically just big toy commercials. But I think for the kids who grew up with them, they were always a lot more than just that. I mean, there really was a lot of creative influence, I think – for *me*, anyways — in those early cartoons.

Sketch: Did you start trying to do storytelling back then, before you really got into comic books?

Jeff: A *little* bit. I would do my own comic books. I remember coming back from movies and I would start drawing my adaptation of a movie that I saw. [Laughter] Like, "Oh, I just saw *Empire Strikes Back*, so I'm going to draw my comic book version of it!" or things like that. That was, pretty much, my earliest version of what I would do for comics. Or if I watched *Transformers*, I would start to draw my own *Transformers* comic, or that kind of thing. It wasn't until maybe my early high school years that I started actually thinking, "Well, maybe I should come up with my own characters,

Sketch: When did you first become interested in drawing?

J. Scott Campbell: As a kid, I was drawing as far back as I can remember, pretty much. My parent's claim that I was drawing as early as the age of one. [Laughter] I'll take their word on that. I can't really remember that far back. But, yeah, as far back as I can remember, I was encouraged to keep up the drawing. As far back as I can remember, that's what I was doing. It always seemed to be my main hobby. And so, I guess it never centered my head

that I would be anything else [but an artist]. It just sort of seemed to be what I was always doing, and always what I was encouraged to do.

In my later years, I guess, it was just trying to determine exactly what I would do with that. But then I always knew I would do something with illustration, or maybe with drawing, whether it be animation — which was kind of an early interest of mine — or comics. And then, later — I'd say probably in my high school years — is when I started to become really intrigued by comic books,

Danger Girl hardcover art

and start figuring out my own kind of stories."

And even then I didn't really get into it too much because, very early on, I started doing a lot of investigation into what it would take to get into the comic book industry. And one thing that seemed pretty consistent at the very beginning was, if you wanted to break in in a mainstream kind of way, *don't* show them your own personal comic book concepts and ideas. I found that it would be better to show them how you would interpret and draw their own characters, like Spider-Man and stuff like that. So I had a few ideas early on, but I'd say not until I was actually in the comic book industry did I *really* start to learn a lot about constructing stories, and really coming up with my own characters, and that sort of thing.

Sketch: Do you have a lot of formal training, or are you largely self-taught?

Jeff: I would say I'm largely self taught. I took two years of commercial art vocational classes [during] my last couple years of high school. For a high school course, that was a surprisingly informative bit of art training I got. I really learned a bit about printing, and learned a lot of computer programs of the time. We're talking about nine or ten years ago, now. That was a *very* informative art class, more so maybe technically than on the actual art aspect, but that was probably the closest thing I ever had to kind of college training.

Sketch: Why didn't you pursue further training after that? Was it because you got hired by Jim Lee, or was there something else behind that decision?

Jeff: It was one of those situations where I was accepted to a couple of art schools that I applied to, including Pratt in New York and, I think, the Rhode Island School of Design, but I just didn't have the finances to pay for it. I started looking into getting some financial assistance, but at that time it just seemed to me — instinctively, anyway — that art was one of those things where, unlike being a lawyer or doctor where you *have* to have the degrees, art is a little more arbitrary. It seems like people tend to look at portfolios more than necessarily your training. So I just kind of figured I'd wing it, and see how far I could go with that.

That's not to say that I *wouldn't* have liked to have gone to art school, because I actually somewhat feel I missed out on that aspect of life experience. I think that would have been really great, going to art school and having other energetic, artistic students around you and stuff like that. That seems like that would have been a *really* great experience. But for me it just wasn't in the cards, and it seemed to work out okay, just teaching myself out of books. [Laughter] I have a tremendous amount of art books and, to this day, it seems like I learn best when I just go at my own pace with a book. There are a lot of really great instructional books and videos and things out there that you can get a

lot of information off of.

Sketch: What are a couple of the titles that you found particularly helpful? Would any of the classics, like the Burne Hogarth or Will Eisner books, be among those?

Jeff: You know, I did get a couple of the Hogarth books, but I gotta say I never really responded well to them. In my opinion, I always thought the Burne Hogarth books were too stylized. I think you come away drawing too much like him. Whereas one of the earliest books I got — I wouldn't necessarily say it's the best *overall* art training book, but for the profession I went into — *How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way* by [John] Buscema, that was a really great book. That one I loved a lot. A couple of anatomy books were really good. Jim Lee turned me on to the George Bridgeman's *Guide to Life Drawing* book. That's a really, *really* good one. And then, just a year or two ago, I was introduced to the Andrew Loomis books, which are out of print. I would have *killed* to have those books ten years ago because they're *tremendously* informative, and not just from a fine art kind of aspect; his techniques and everything really lend themselves to the comic book industry and the kinds of things we do. I think it was a really, *really* ahead-of-its-time book series that that guy put together. It's really great stuff. I'm sure there are a ton of books I'm forgetting, but those are the ones that just kind of spring to mind initially.

PSM cover

With me, even though I'm very proud of *Danger Girl*, I can feel my artwork starting to become just a little bit stale. So I kind of feel like, "Okay, well what can I do to sort of inspire myself and bring something new to my art work, while at the same time not alienating the people who really do enjoy what I draw?" You know, without necessarily throwing away every aspect that makes my artwork popular or something that my fans seek out. So, like I said, that's kind of the point I'm at right now; trying to figure out what it is I'm going to do. But at the same time, I'm at the point where I go, "Man, if I draw this face the same way I've drawn it *one* more time, I'm gonna pull my hair out!" [General laughter] Because you kind of get bored. You get bored with yourself.

Which is why I'm getting more involved in the coloring and stuff like that. Because coloring has opened up a whole new world of expressing what I do drawing-wise. And in many cases, I draw the way I draw because I know a colorist is going to handle it. I know if I don't draw the bridge of this nose on this girl, a colorist is going to go in there and do it for me, and they might do it wrong and they'll make her look unattractive, or something like that. So, in many cases, a lot of ways I draw is because I'm sort of putting these extra lines down because I know it's being interpreted by a colorist, and if I don't give them all the information it's not going to look right. Whereas if I color it myself or get involved in the coloring, I can perhaps draw less.

Lately, I'm impressed with the artists that put less lines down, because I think it just has a much fresher, lighter look, and in many ways it's less heavy and more fluid. But like I said, to do that you really have to work with a colorist who is on the same page with you, or isn't going to go in there and over-render it and make up for the fact that you don't have all these lines on the page. So it's a challenge, definitely.

Sketch: You've said that you have a lot of books for inspiration on hand, and that led me to wondering if you use much reference in your work? Do you ever use reference for the women, the guns, the cars, etc.?

Jeff: Not so much for the women. I do for the guns and cars in *Danger Girl*, absolutely. I *really* wanted to give it this "real world" feel, so I bought a lot of these really thick, Sears catalogue-size books from Japan that they have all these gun replicas and stuff in. I bought a lot of those, initially, because they just had all these guns from different angles and stuff. Which started off as really good reference, but in the end being really difficult to manage because you've got these big binders full of these pages you've sliced out of these magazines. More recently, in the last few years I started buying a lot of these twelve-inch GI Joe-type figures. There's a lot of companies that do a much better job with figures nowadays, and they do these little gun replicas for these twelve inch figures that are amazingly detailed. It makes for much better reference, because then you have it right there in front of you, and you can move it around and get different angles. And in some cases, too, with vehicles. There was an issue or two where we had Abby driving this Porsche Boxer, so I went and bought one of those thirty dollar steel replicas, and I could position it any way I needed on my desk, and get all the angles that I needed, and that kind of thing. So that kind of stuff I use a lot of reference for. Or, in the case of *Danger Girl*, we had that sort

And then, of course, just looking at tons of artists, absorbing as many different influences and styles as I could. I've got a library of books that's just ridiculous at this point. My wife always goes, "Oh. You bought *more* books." But I think when you're an artist you can never get enough influence, you can never get enough sources of inspiration. What started off with me following Art Adams [referring to a pre-interview conversation] — has now turned into me following many, *many* different artists, in many cases from different countries. Not just Japanese artists, but artists from Europe and elsewhere. I try to really look *outside* of comic books as much as possible now for my influences, because I really...

After you're in the industry for a while, you become *numb* to the typical way of drawing. Or the typical way of handling comic books. So you look for that creative or influential buzz from other sources, you know? So I think, in recent years, I've got a lot of books from other countries, or comic book art from other countries. A lot of art from movies, like conceptual drawings, and things like that. That's the kind of stuff that gets me excited and inspires me to do good comic books.

Sketch: Also, by looking outside of comics, that keeps you fresh, doesn't it? Because a solution that once was cool or original can become a bit stale, or even a crutch, can't it?

Jeff: Yeah, exactly. I've either been fortunate, or not disciplined enough, to handle the monthly chores on a comic book, but I think that's ultimately what ends up happening to you. You rely on formulas to get the work done in a very fast pace, and those formulas *do* become crutches. They become almost something you can't get rid of, or become difficult to shake. I've even developed a bit of those myself, even doing the few comic books that I've done over the past few years. Which is why I'm trying to kind of break down my style right now. I feel like I'm doing a spring cleaning with my artistic style right now. I'm going, "Okay, which are the clothes that I'm keeping, and which are the ones I'm chucking?" An artist is always going to draw a certain way. I think that, no matter how much you try to change your style, your style is you in many ways. You can only change yourself so much. But at the same time, you can challenge yourself and attempt to try to do something different.

of globe trotting feel to the book, so I have a lot of these geography books so that I can pull out real quickly and easily any kind of icons from different countries like buildings, and architecture, and that type of thing.

But as far as me using references for getting bodies and that kind of thing, not so much. But I could see myself returning to that in the next couple of months because, like I said, I'm trying to tweak my style. I think a typical comic book's pitfall is that you kind of have a generic guy face and a generic girl face, and then you just kind of alternate the hairstyles or eye colors. When it came to guys, I tried not to do that quite as much. But it's easy with girls; you kind of create in your mind what you think is your ideal sense of beauty and then, unfortunately, it becomes difficult to stray from it because, if you stray from it, you think you're creating a girl that's not quite as attractive, or something like that. So I'm trying to work on that a bit.

I did that a *little* bit with *Danger Girl*. I felt like some of the girls looked different. I had a character named Natalia who I thought looked very different from the other two Danger Girls. But it was real easy with the other ones to sometimes still fall into that pitfall of having them look the same. So what I'm trying to do now is perhaps play around with body types and facial structure a little bit, so that I can hopefully create more of an individual personality for each one of the characters. So to do that, I'm looking at a lot more photos of celebrities. If I see a photo of a celebrity that has a particular look, I'll go, "Okay, what is it that makes this celebrity attractive, but different from this other attractive celebrity?" [Laughter] You know, that kind of thing, so I can pick up on those kind of nuances. So I can see myself going back to having a little bit more reference in that aspect of things.

Sketch: Well, let's talk about how you approach the page. It sounds like you usually work from a plot outline as opposed to a full script.

Jeff: True.

Sketch: Even if you've helped create or flesh out that plot, do you sit down and reread it before you do thumbnails or hitting the boards?

Jeff: Yes. Well, I'll have a plot, but usually the plot's in my head. Sometimes I'll write down key points that I have to get through, but to get a comic book to fit twenty-two pages, it's work. More or less, you have the beginning and you have the end, and it's like, "Okay, how much of this story can I squeeze in these pages and make it work?" Because every page you go over twenty-two pages is an additional day or two of work that you are going to have to budget time for, or you're going to have to add time to your schedule to accommodate for the extra pages. And then you're also giving, in some cases, more pages than they're paying for — which can sometimes hurt you. I mean, it sounds like a greedy tycoon talking, but it's one of those things where if I add a page, especially when I was working with DC, if I add a page to the twenty-two pages so that it's now twenty-three, there'd be issues like, "Okay, which advertisement are we going to pull? Can we pull an advertisement for that page, or are we going to pull the letters page for that page?" So it becomes an issue.

So it's very important to try to get the story done in twenty-two pages. So to do that, and have the story feel like it's ending in an appropriate spot, I find that I've got to do thumbnails to kind of make

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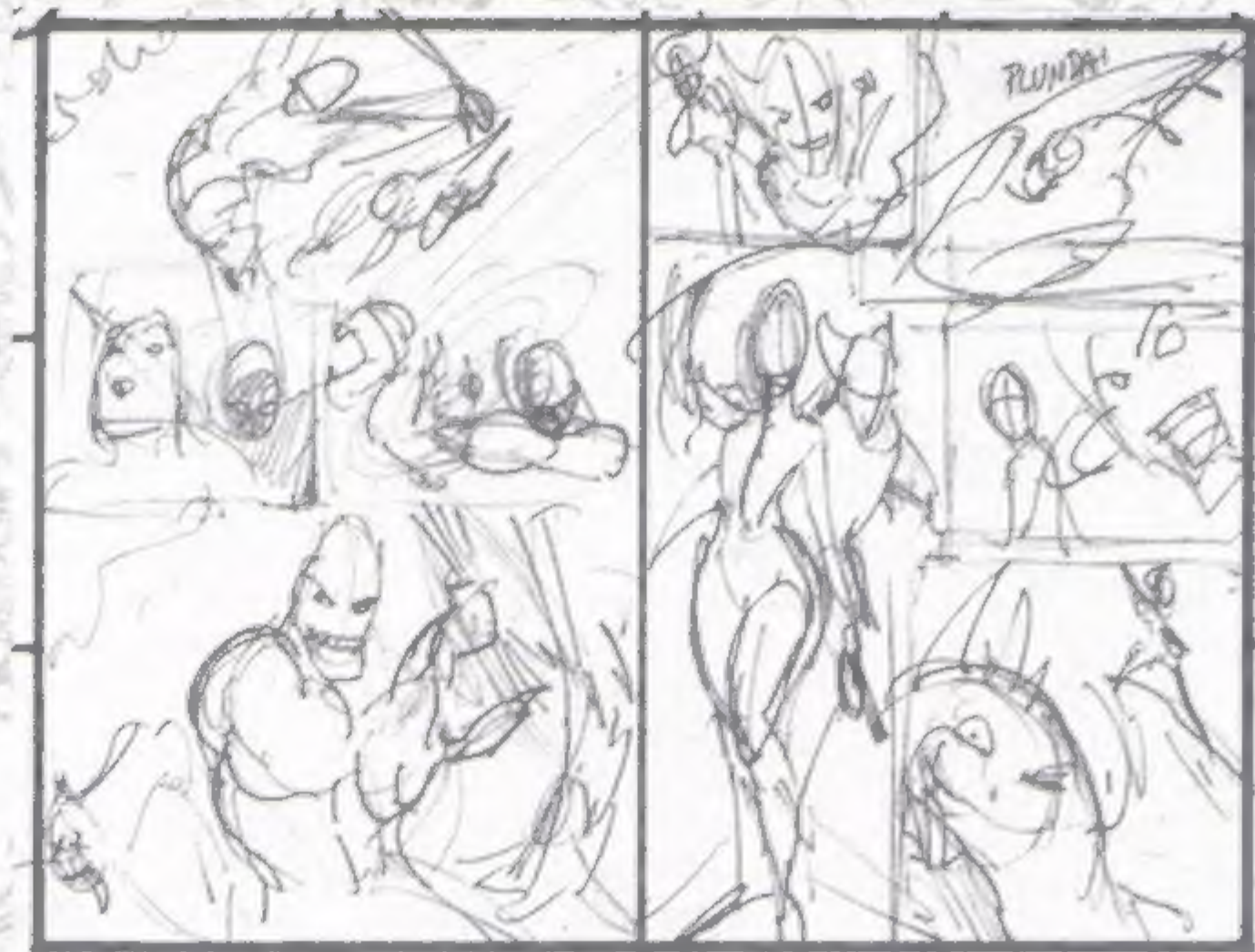
THUMBNAILS

LAYOUTS

FINISHED PENCILS

Characters from Jeff's "new project" to be released in 2003.

sure it's all going to work out. And it never fails that my first run-through with thumbnails will be me cramming it as much as I can. [General laughter] Meaning not leaving much room for splash pages or shots that'll be really cool. Like I'll be drawing a page and I'll go, "Man, this panel would be really great if I could make this the whole page, or a two page spread! But, for now, I'm just going to cram it to see how many pages I'm left over with." And it never fails, every time I do that I end up a page over. And that's with me cramming it. So I never get the luxury, it seems, of ending up with nineteen pages and then getting to fill out a couple with those big cool shots. It always seems as though I have to stick with my original crammed version, which ends up being like eight or nine to ten panels per page; which can very laborious, and sometimes adds to why it takes my comic books so long to get done.

Sometimes I feel like I have a tendency to make an eleven page story turn into seventeen pages, just because I really like to depict everything that's going on, or the nuances of a close up of a facial expression, or, "Oh, man, it'd be really great if I did this shot in between these two panels!" [General laughter] So it seems I make things hard on myself by drawing everything I could possibly think of when it comes to a scene. Like I don't leave much to the imagination in some cases. Which, in some ways, I've had compliments about. Some people really like the fact that, sometimes in my stories, you can tell what's going on without reading the dialogue. And I think that's because I put so many panels on the page, or I leave so little off that you need to know.

So I would like to return to doing more splash pages and bigger shots, because I think I could draw much faster, and I think it would make it easier on myself. But, so far, it seems like I keep ending up with these ten, eleven, twelve panel pages. It's kind of ridiculous.

Sketch: *When you thumbnail out the issue, what kind of paper are you using and how long does it take?*

Jeff: Well, I'll usually take an 8 1/2" by 11" piece of paper, and I have a mock up sheet, where I have four squares across, and then four squares under those. So there's eight squares on a page, and one square's like 2" by 3", so that's the proportions of like a 10" by 15" inch area on a regular board. And that's usually what I'll jot it all down in. I'll xerox off a bunch of those mock up sheets, so I have a stack of them that I grab out of for several issues worth. And I'll just work on these little sheets, and I'll just work out these little thumbnails with a pencil. And I'll erase them sometimes if I can see a page isn't working quite right.

But that really kind of is the breakdown formula for what I'm going to do in the whole book, so I can make sure all the action's going to fit. In some cases, nobody else would ever really be able to tell what this stuff is; it's kind of a scribble or a chicken scratch in many ways, because I don't want to get too involved in the drawing. And because, to me, it will take away from the energy of the final drawing. Also, I kind of feel if I get too involved in it, and then I feel a page isn't working or I end up with too many pages, I'm going to have to erase these anyway. So I don't want it to be a really good drawing or something that I'll have a really tough time cutting, because if I already fell in love with an idea by sitting there and working it out and drawing it too detailed, it's going to be very hard

to come up with something new if it's not working. So usually these little thumbnails are *very* loose. Sometimes I'll look at something and say, "What the hell did I draw?" [General laughter] I'll end up trying to figure out what it was I was going for. So it's this weird balance of trying to come up with enough information so I *know* what I was thinking, without necessarily coming up with and working out the details of a whole shot. But that's usually what I'll do. And I think it usually takes me about an hour to do a whole issue that way.

And then the next step is, once I decide that the group of thumbnails is working for the entire issue and I think I've got it down, then what I'll do is I'll take a board — and usually it's the board that I actually draw the actual comic on, usually comic paper from DC or whatever I'm working with — and I'll divide it into fours. I'll draw a line right down the middle, and right in the middle of the side, so it's basically a big "X" dividing the page up into four separate areas. So basically what I'll do then is I'll start drawing what I call layouts for four pages. Now each one of them is about half the size of what the page is really going to look like. That was a technique I started before I even got into comics, just because it's always been more comfortable for me to draw small than big. Because when I draw big things get kind of wonky and don't look right, [probably because] I'm too close to the page, because I draw very close to the page. And I found when I draw small I work out problems *much* quicker. I don't know, I just feel a lot more comfortable just drawing *tiny*.

I used to draw *ridiculously* tight with these little things. Jim Lee used to joke that he could take one of these little layouts and blow it up and that would be the page. [General laughter] But I've tried to get a little looser since then. Now when I do it there's usually no outfits on them. I remember Adam Hughes saw me doing one of these once and he said, "So you draw the page with everybody *naked* on the page?" And it's not really that; it's just that I'm not going to waste the time drawing the outfits, because it's just the *structure* [I'm concerned with here]. It's just me kind of creating the structure and the plan for the page. And with heads, I'll try to just keep it like an "X", like a target on their face, and that type of thing. Unless it's a close-up and I'm trying to work out a certain expression; sometimes I'll try it out there.

But I'll do those and, like I said, you'll get four pages, half size, on one normal size sheet of board. And usually those don't take that long. People think that always takes a long time, like, "Why do you do that step? Why don't you just go straight to the final page?" I found that when I go straight to the page, it takes me longer than doing it this way. Because when I do it this way I draw much faster. You see, I'm much more comfortable with the size, and that comfort allows me to draw faster, and I'm much happier with the results, so I don't have to redraw things as often, and then I just blow it up on the xerox machine — it's like 200% or whatever you want to call it — and then I lightbox it, basically just the structure line. Now when I lightbox it, I'm not doing the final drawing. I'm basically just — with the hardest lead pencil I have, not pressing that hard — I'm basically just tracing the exact lines I have on this layout but in a bigger, 200% form.

So I basically trace the blown up, roughed-out, layout onto my final board. I usually will do one page of tracing in like fifteen minutes or something like that. And then I'll put the xerox away, take it

[the fresh trace] off the light table, and put it on the regular drawing board. And then I'll just lightly erase over it, so that it erases all those light lines I just traced, but you can still see the faint impression of those lines. And *that's* when I finally start my *actual* drawing. That's when I'm really pressing hard with my pencil, and working out the facial details and the outfits and all that kind of stuff. And in some cases, I'll rough out more of the outfit lines, or faces and stuff, and then lightly erase it again, so that those guide lines are there, and then I'll do what I consider my "real" drawing over it. And usually it takes me about ... [Laughter] I'm trying to get faster, after all these years, but it still seems to take me about a couple days to do a really good page. About two days work. And that's me working pretty full days. Usually there's a couple phone calls, or something else that comes up, so it's very rare that you can get the whole day to spend on a page. I've drawn some pages in a day, or covers in a day, if it's just like big characters or something like that. But like I say; if you're drawing a page and there's like nine panels on it, and each panel has a background or two or three characters, it can take a long time. So that's usually the process I work in.

Sketch: And the workday would be between six and eight hours of actual work, then?

Jeff: Something like that. I actually work pretty normal hours these days. [Laughter] Most comic book artists, it seems, still kinda come in in the afternoon, and then work until like three or four in the morning or something like that. I did that for a long time, but I've been married for a few years, now. That just doesn't work if you're married. [General laughter] So I typically will get up around 8:00AM, sometimes nine if I worked a late night beforehand, and I'll usually be at work between nine and ten in the morning, and then I'm usually working most of the day. I'll usually take a few hours off in the evening to eat, visit with my wife or watch a show, something like that. And then typically I'll come back down [to my studio] to work a couple more hours, sometimes two or three more hours, before I go to sleep. And that's pretty much how it goes Monday through Friday. [Laughter] When I was behind on my issues of *Danger Girl* I would work Saturdays and Sundays usually, almost all the time, too. I typically don't like to do that. It seems like I ultimately end up working one of the two days of the weekend, usually Saturday. I like to take at least one day off, or at least a day and a half, on the weekends. But usually there's always something that needs to be finished off, or some cover I got roped into doing, or something like that. [General laughter.]

Sketch: When you first started really working as a pro, it was in a studio, which must have been pretty hectic and chaotic at times.

Jeff: Sure.

Sketch: And now you're working by yourself, right?

Jeff: Yeah.

Sketch: Do you prefer it that way, or do you sometimes really miss that shared studio environment?

Jeff: That's a good question. You know, I have to say that I *really* enjoyed the studio experience, actually. There was a vibe and an energy there when everybody was in the same room that I thought never was quite the same once we moved studios.

Unused G. I. Joe cover

Originally we were at a studio in Mira Mesa in San Diego, which was more or less an office building, nothing really special. And then a few years after I was there, they upgraded to an office space in La Jolla, which is a *beautiful* location, but everybody got kind of segmented. They all had their own office, and at that point the energy was never quite the same. I mean, Jim Lee had his own office when we were at that first studio, but he was never in it. He would always come out and draw with us, just because I think *he* fed off that energy, too. And from what I hear — I haven't been at WildStorm for about a year and a half now, since I moved out, and actually, before that, I was even drawing at home for about a year — but I've heard that he's somewhat recreated a bit of that feel. Like, all the artists draw in one big room now, so that they all sort of feed off of each other.

But I've found that with where I'm at now, I really do like the isolation. I've always sort of, I think, worked best that way. I think one of the reasons I was always attracted to art is that I *do* like

to be alone for long periods of time. There's some sort of weird solitude with it, or something like that. [Laughter] Where you can just work and it's quiet, or you put some music on, and it's just you. I don't think that I necessarily would like the chaos of a working environment like that shared studio anymore. But you go in weird cycles, you know?

Sometimes there are times that I long for that, but I think, overall, I do prefer being by myself. Especially, like I said, with all my levels to working on a page — like xeroxing and then putting it on a light board and all that kind of stuff — it used to always be kind of weird when people would be looking over my shoulder all the time going, "What are you doing?" Especially if you're working on something and you keep erasing it, or you have a bunch of reference out because you're trying to work on something innovative or trying to rethink your style, you don't want somebody looking over your shoulder second guessing you or telling you, "What are you doing? That's weird!

Austin Powers art

Jeff: I'm not sure what their official name is. I guess they're drafting pencils, the ones you still have to sharpen, but they have those pincher clamps on them. And then the lead that I get; I usually like Berol Turquoise, I think is the brand, in those little lead packs where they come like twelve leads in a pack. And usually I'll alternate. Usually when I'm laying out I'll use the H lead, like I was talking about when I'm doing the lines that I don't want to show up really all that dark, and I don't really press all that hard on it. But if I'm doing some real sketching or I really want a dark line, sometimes I'll use like an F or like an HB lead, just because I want that darker kind of look. It's a real balance, though, for all comic book artists of trying to come up with that real dark, meaty kind of sketchy lead, while at the same time not smearing your page to such a degree that it all just turns gray at the end. So it's a real balance there.

I don't like mechanical pencils, and I'm not a big fan of H lead mainly because I just don't like that harsh, sterile look of, like, just one hard line. Sometimes the way I like to pencil the best is when it's not quite sharp but quite dull; it's in that medium state where you can get a little bit of a thicker line or a thinner line at the same time.

Sketch: Depending on how hard you press, right?
Jeff: Exactly. I think it just has more of an *earthy* feel, and just feels more like art when it's like that. Like I say, when it's a mechanical pencil, it feels too technical to me. It feels like I'm drafting or something like that. [Laughter.]

It seems like from day one I've always been at odds with inkers at the studio, because it seems like inkers will try to outdo other inkers by seeing

who can get the finest razor-sharp line and things like that. And I always felt - because there's some early comics I look back on and I feel like the art work's barely on the page because all these inkers were [trying to] outdo each other by who could get the most razor-thin lines - where I'm going, "God, beef up these lines!" I'll sit there and pencil pages to this day, and I'll spend another two hours sometimes on a page just going over lines and making them thick, because I'm afraid an inker won't know to do that — that they'll still make everything razor-thin. And I think the page — especially for my style, since I don't put a lot of cross hatching and stuff in it — I feel like the holding lines are *so* important. If you don't put a good, *meaty* line on some of these curves and stuff like that, I think it just won't show up. It'll look faint on the page, like I didn't draw anything.

Sketch: Right. And it also adds a real weight to the characters, and makes them pop a bit, doesn't it?
Jeff: Definitely. Makes them pop off of a background, or just gives them a sense of depth. Yeah, absolutely. So I've always been a big fan of putting a good amount of beefy lines on there. So I like it sometimes when a pencil starts to get a little worn away. Because it'll give me, usually, that thicker line I'm looking for, so that if I do have to get something inked, hopefully it'll give the inker the nudge to go a little thicker on it.

But for some reason, to this day, I think there's still that perception with inkers that if you are putting a thick line down you somehow are a clumsy or chunky inker, or something like that. I'm not sure what started that whole mentality, but I think it's just maybe because it's more of a technical profession than maybe penciling, where penciling tends to be a little heavier on the art end. There's always a bit of that tug of war or a bit of a clash there sometimes.

Sketch: What kind of paper do you like? Is there a particular thickness and tooth that you prefer?
Jeff: That's a good question. The thickness is a tough one, because in most cases I always have the paper supplied to my by either Image or DC. With DC, I remember they had a much toothier type of paper, and then a smoother kind of paper. I *thought* I would like the toothier, because I do tend to enjoy a more artistic approach to comic books. I don't like it when comic books are overly technical. But I've got to say I do prefer the smooth paper, because the toothy paper, it's a little *too* unforgiving. When I pencil on that and if I make any mistakes, it seems like *no* amount of erasing gets that line off of the toothy paper. It's *there*. It's dug in, it's made its home, you're not going to get it out. And I *do* like my pages to look very clean. I've found when I do those layouts like I mentioned and transfer them onto a board, one of the major advantages is, because I've worked out so many of the problems already, it keeps the page very clean. But nevertheless, even to this day I find I have to draw most faces over two or three times just to get the look I want, and like I said, the toothy paper, it just does not forgive. It takes the pencil and just won't let go. [Laughter] Whereas with the smoother paper I find that I can sometimes erase two or three times if I need to, and it's almost back to new when I erase it. So I do like that.

I'm trying to think of the thickness. I tend to have a pretty thick board, although I remember it

I don't understand that," you know? [General laughter] So sometimes it's nice to just work things out by yourself without having to explain it to somebody.

Sketch: What kind of pencils are you using these days? Are they the mechanical type of holders, and what kind of lead do you like to use?

Britney Spears and Eminem art

took some adjustment when I first started working with thicker boards because of my lightbox technique. If you get too thick of a board, you can't see your layout that you're transferring, you know? [General laughter] So I think, usually, a good medium was a 500 ply. Does that sound right?

Sketch: That sounds about right.

Jeff: I think I've had some bristol that I've bought at art stores that I've cut down that works really good too. Yeah, that's the most detail that I can go into on that one. But I'm going to have to get a little more familiar with that, too, because I'm about to run out of my backlog stock of paper that I had from other companies. So, since I'm working on this new comic book project on my own for now, I'm going to have to basically either buy blue line paper, the kind you get out of the backs of comic books, you know, that you mail order, or go to the art store and cut my own. I'll have to actually figure that out soon.

Sketch: You know, earlier you were talking about inkers and such. Have you ever inked your own stuff, or is that something that you'd prefer to have someone else — with the right touch — do over your pencils?

Jeff: I have. It's funny, though, how pencilers tend to have an impatient attitude towards inking, though. [General laughter] It's strange. I'm not sure what it is. For me, it's tough because I do a lot of erasing when I draw. I'm not sure why it is. It's not because I don't think I'm good at drawing, but I tend to experiment a lot, and sometimes the experiments take two or three tries to get right. So with faces and things like that, or just that fact of me trying to be a perfectionist to a certain degree, if a face is just *slightly* wrong I'll redo it all over again. So in that aspect, I could never be an inker, or a penciler/inker who does a rough layout and then inks over it, like Todd McFarlane used to do, because I wouldn't trust myself to get it right on the first try. So I would probably end up penciling pretty tightly before I would even start the inking process, and *then* it sort of feels like you're drawing twice. It's sort of a tough thing, because I would feel like, "Oh, I already drew that face. Now I have to go through it all *again* with ink."

I also found, too, that I feel more comfortable with markers and pens than I do with a crow quill. I never really got along with a crow quill or a brush. I can get along with brushes better, but a brush is a tough tool to use. And you can't use it for everything, especially if you have a style like mine that tends to be a very liney style. I just find brushes don't — just because I have been doing comic books so long a certain way — a brush look on me doesn't work as well as a brush mixed with a pen. And, like I said; those crow quills, I just never got the hang of it. [Laughter] I always "blooped" my page in there with a big blot of ink and stuff like that. It just seemed horrible. Or I'll just get it right, and then because I still have a penciler mentality, I'll run my hand across it and smear it all across the page. [General laughter.]

So I found that if I do any inking, I get along *much* better with those Pigma markers. I *love* those pens. They do fade a little bit if you don't handle them right or if you erase them too much, but I just found they give me much more of a look I'm happy with than working a frustrating process with a crow quill pen.

And it's funny, because the more I've talked to other pencilers, it seems as though they have the same mentality. Because I know Jim Lee, he'll
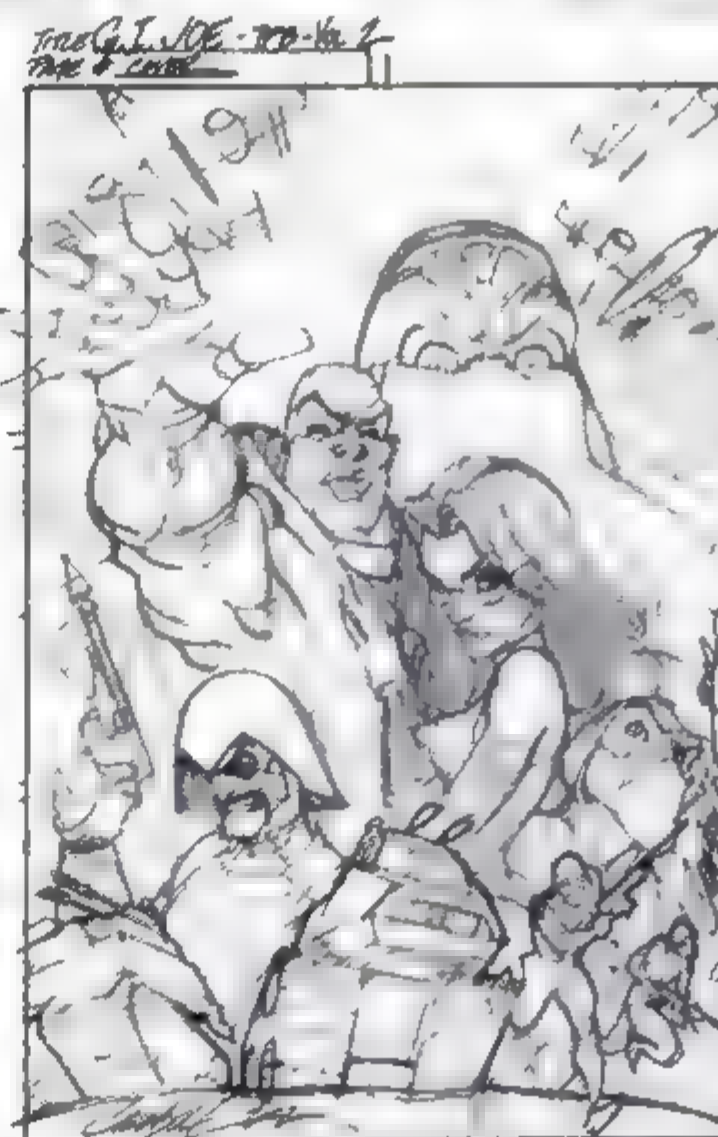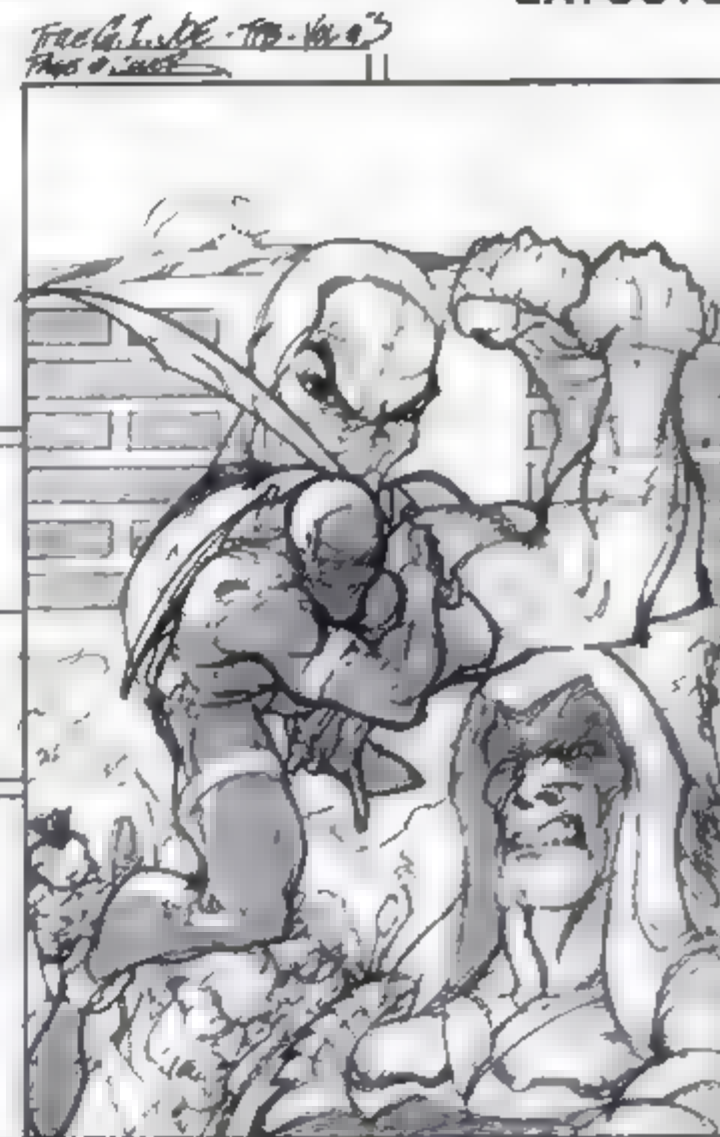
STEP-BY-STEP
G. I. JOE
TRADE PAPERBACK COVERS

THUMBNAIL

LAYOUTS

FINISHED PENCILS

Battle of the Planets trading card

Joker character study

occasionally ink his stuff with crow quill, but I know he uses those Pigma markers like there's no tomorrow. He'll ink a lot of his stuff with that. And I know Art Adams, who does a lot of inking over himself these days, uses markers *exclusively*. I think he uses the same pens. And I think for the type of impatience that comes along with penciling, I think that's sort of a way of getting a black line without a lot of fuss. And I don't think there's anything wrong with using those. [Laughter] I mean, it seems like a rookie thing to use, especially in this industry, but to me, hey, anything that puts down a black line that you're happy with, go to it, you know?

Sketch: Oh, yeah. And another thing is that the inks they're putting in those pens are a lot better than what they used in the past.

Jeff: Yeah. You're exactly right. Well, a lot of inkers sometimes will exclusively use technical pens, too. Richard Friend, who used to ink over Travis Charest for a few years, would him ink exclusively with technical pens because he really wanted a fine line, and a crow quill was just too brutal for those really fine lines that he had. So he just had a whole *army* off technical pens, and I think at some point he really loved to use disposable technical pens where, once they clog up, you just chuck them and buy new ones. They were a lot more easy when it came to cleaning them and everything like that.

Sketch: Yeah, you just toss the garbage out! [General laughter.]

Jeff: Yeah, exactly so. But I'm kind of digging on this digital inking thing right now. In some cases it gives your line a little bit of a gritty look, but I don't necessarily think that's a bad thing. Once again, kind of dating back to my Disney influence, Disney movies to this day are still ... I was just watching *Tarzan* the other day, and there they have some scenes where there's a close up of Tarzan's face, and you can almost see the pencil lines creating Tarzan's face. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm pretty sure that the way they do Disney animation is the animator will pencil it out, they'll get another animator to clean up their pencils — once again, though, with a pencil — and then they're basically scanned into the computer and then colored and everything, and put together in the computer. But you're still getting, basically, a pencil line that's just being manipulated by computer; there's no inker that necessarily goes over those lines. And I think in some cases it gives it a fluid, artistic look that sometimes an inker would probably sterilize, or kind of take away. There's some sort of a little bit of an energy to it when a line's a little raw or a little bit jagged-looking I think.

Sketch: Right. It's almost an organic quality.

Jeff: Yeah, exactly. Which I think in recent years, comic books seem to be really losing that organic feel with computer manipulation, and all the things that are going on in coloring, and sometimes inking is handled in an overly technical kind of way. And I always thought that a lot of that organic-ness starts to fall to the side, and you start to get these very ... almost robotic-looking drawings that start to look a little harsh.

Sketch: What program have you been using for the electronic inking?

Jeff: So far I've been giving it to other guys from other studios. If I'm correct, I would assume they're using Photoshop, and manipulating it with levels and things like that. When I've tried it myself that's

what I would use. More recently, I'm trying to explore this new Painter program to try to see what I can maybe bring to the table from that. I know some colorists are using that in conjunction with Photoshop to do some coloring on a lot of these comic books. So those are the two, primarily, that I'm using right now.

Sketch: Does the story telling aspect of the work, because you have such a strong interest in film and animation, does that just seem to come naturally to you, or do you sometimes have to labor over that?

Jeff: The story telling is something that's always, for me, come real naturally. I don't think I've *ever* really had to think about it.] If anything, it's just editing myself that's a challenge Like I said, ending up with too many panels for a page or something like that; I could probably edit myself a lot better. [Laughter] But as far as the way visuals fly through my head, it seems really organic and very ... I don't know, it comes naturally when it comes to what angle I want to pick, or what best suits a situation. I've always had a real easy time with that. To the point almost where I'll draw something that I know will take me three times longer to draw [than it would] if I picked an easier shot, but I almost don't even second guess it. If I go, "That's the best shot," that's the best shot. I'm going to have to draw it that way. That's the way it's going to have to be to look cool. [Laughter] So, in that respect, maybe I *should* think about it more But it's always really come naturally. I don't really labor over that part hardly at all.

The aspects I hate about comic books to this day are still the texture details. Like there's a character who's in *Danger Girl*, her name is Sydney Savage, and she had on an entirely leather body suit. You know, very "official spy gear" kind of thing that I guess they give you. I really like the look of a shiny leather outfit, but it was probably the most laborious, just *tedious* job to sit there and render that outfit panel after panel. Because you *draw* it, you get the whole drawing done, and then you've got to go back in there and black it all out! And then if she has wrinkles, you've got to figure out, "Okay, how's the black going to react to wrinkles?" And, "Oh, she has a zipper here!" And, "Oh, there's side lighting on her, so the black doesn't go right to the edge of her leg; it stops here because of the side lighting." I mean, it's *really* a lot of thought that goes into that, and it just seemed like sometimes to do just a panel of her in that outfit would take, I swear, like three times as long to draw than any other character. And a lot of characters would have leather pants or whatever, because it was the spy look to have a lot of leather or shiny kind of stuff, and that kind of stuff will just drive me nuts. Or if there's a brunette, and I've got to do her hair dark, I'll just go, "Oh, brother!" It's like you black it out, and then there's a strand of hair, and you black it out again. And then, in most cases with me, I'll fill in the blacks because it starts to get overly complicated. If I don't fill in the blacks, an inker is going to become *completely* lost; they're not going to know what this is.

So I'm hoping, if I become more adept at the computer, that I can find shortcuts to do that type of stuff. Because I would love just to draw a girl, like in animation, where you just draw a girl with hair and then you put it into color, and *that's* where you make her a brunette. You don't do it in the black and white form, you know? Like Disney animators, if they draw Pocahontas, they don't sit there and fill in her hair on each page that they

animate; they just do the lines and then that all comes into play in the computer. So I think I'd like to do more of that type of stuff, where I rely on the computer to do those effects a lot more. Or not *rely* on it, but I do those effects in the computer, which I think will be a lot less time consuming, and I think the results will look nicer, too.

And, the ideas I have for coloring, I don't see anybody doing right now. So I kind of feel like I've got to get on the computer and kind of work it out, or at least create some sort of rule book; "How you handle this character," and "This is what you do." Almost like a model sheet to a certain degree, and say, like, "Hey, this is how this character is handled. These are the color swatches. This is how her hair looks. This is how her suits look. These are the lines that could turn into a color," that type of thing.

Sketch: Almost sounds like it's time to start looking for an apprentice. [General laughter.]
Jeff: I know. I probably should, actually. That would be a good idea.

Sketch: How about covers? Does the design of those single images come as naturally as the story telling, or is it a bit of a struggle for you?
Jeff: It's a struggle only because, in most cases when I'm doing a cover, I'm usually doing it for somebody else. When I do my own covers it comes as easy as anything. But when I'm doing it for somebody else it usually involves giving them a couple thumbnails, and it's the old artist's joke that, if you give them three thumbnails and there's one that's your least favorite, *that's* the one they'll pick. So that always is kind of a bit of a disappointment when they say, "Yeah, we like # 3." And you're like, "Really? You don't like # 2, and you don't like # 1?" So then you sometimes end up doing a cover that you honestly, as an artist, don't think is the best idea. So that can be a bit of an enthusiasm-drainer. And then sometimes I'll turn in a cover and they'll go, "You know, this thing right here would look so much better if it was to the left," or something. I find if you over-think *anything* too much, it's almost impossible not to lose some enthusiasm for it. And sometimes covers can be a bit of a struggle just because, if you get somebody else sort of telling you what they think it should be, especially when you're so used doing things however you please, it can be a real struggle just because each time you revamp something or have to rework it, you're draining a little bit of that enthusiasm again and again and again out of the project.

Sketch: Right, and you can really lose that momentum and thrill of the moment, too.
Jeff: Exactly. So I've had some covers where they were reworked so many times I just go, "Boy, the original flow and vision of that thing is so far gone, I don't know what happened to it!" [General laughter] It's just a bunch of lines at that point.

Sketch: How do you design a cover or pin-up? Is it similar to the way you create one of your pages, or do you use a different approach to creating that stand-alone image?
Jeff: Well, I'll usually jot down something, some sort of sketch. I'll *always* do some sort of sketch before I do the final piece. I know there are some people out there that just have the gift and can skip that step, like Jim Lee. He can go right to the board and create it right there while he's doing it. And in some cases, that technique, I think, *really* lends

Unused Buffy cover

itself to doing comics in a speedy fashion. Which is why I never drew comic books that fast. [Laughter] Because I *will* usually sit there and rethink it or do three or four different versions, because to me, it's got to be something I'm excited about. I've got to see the design to a certain degree before I can commit a whole page to it. And I find thumbnails help to do that.

And I remember too; a lot of the guys at the [WildStorm] studio were really wondering about my technique where I lay it out and light box it, or something to that degree. They used to always say, "Don't you find that the piece loses energy when you do that?" That somehow the energy is in the original drawing, and then you light box it and it kind of dies a little bit. And I can see why some people would say that, because I have seen some artists where that *is* the case. Where somehow, sketches in their sketchbook are twenty times more exciting than the final result. But I don't find that that's the case with my stuff. I find, usually, when

I light box something, that once it's on the page and I start doing the final drawing, I push it even further. I try to see, "Well, maybe if I nudge that leg up just a little bit more," or maybe now that I've got this structure and I feel pretty good about it, I can push it to the next level. So I find it's just the opposite with me. I find if I *don't* do a layout, it gets frozen because I start to freeze up thinking it's not going to work. Whereas if I know it works in a layout, it gives me confidence to push it that much further.

Sketch: Right. And rather than adding a lot of lines like some guys will to refine something, it seems like you're often striping that stuff away.
Jeff: *Exactly.* That's exactly the case. In many cases you go, "Boy, that line's not really necessary. It works without it," or, "It just looks much cleaner this way." Yeah, I very rarely have looked at a layout afterwards and thought that it was the better of the two. I mean, it really seems to me that

Danger Girl Sketchbook art

Sketch: *Now with storyboarding and things like that, is it basically the same as working on the comics for you, or do you find yourself using a different part of your brain, so to speak?*

Jeff: It's a *little* different, although it does come very naturally to me. One of the things I just put out was this *Danger Girl Sketchbook*, and inside of that there was about four or five pages worth of storyboards I did for the opening sequence of the *Danger Girl* video game. Which was a really fluid motion of the camera spinning around, and it was almost like the camera had one continuous shot through the whole opening of this video game. And it was a *little* different, in the fact that I kept every panel the same. You can't change the proportions of a panel because the screen doesn't change proportions; it's a certain way. And just because of the cinema aspect of it, I did all the storyboards in wide screen, like they looked like they were in a movie. So in that case you're kind of limited, unlike a comic book where you can all of a sudden make a panel very narrow if you want to frame a face just right, or that kind of thing. I mean you can even do that kind of thing, actually, in storyboards, too, but it just seems that you're more locked in a certain aspect ratio. So that's kind of different.

Also, with this particular one, it was a very fluid; a single shot camera move. Rather than constantly changing angles like you tend to do in comic books this was the same angle, but you had the motion and the subject in the camera moving and changing in each panel. So that was a little different, because I will very rarely do a comic where I'll have like a locked camera, where I'm constantly showing just subtle differences between each shot.

But it does come naturally to me. Like I said, I always felt that I could have been an animator if I had wanted to. And in the same *Danger Girl Sketchbook* I put these little flip books in the corner of the pages, which were these little animations of the Danger Girls running, or one of the Danger Girls whipping, stuff like that. And it wasn't really much of a struggle at all. It really seemed to come real natural for me. And if anything, I thought by doing that little exercise, it sort of taught me something. You know, you always come away learning something about yourself or something about your style, and I think it's just another tool in your toolbox you can refer to.

Sketch: *Was it pretty much the same thing with the toy designs?*

Jeff: Yeah. It was kind of interesting for myself to think of my own 2-D drawings in that kind of 3-D aspect. Like, "OK, here's the front view, here's the side view, here's the back view," and to make them all work together. You sort of realize, "Oh, if I don't check my style, this won't work in 3-D!" [Laughter] You've got to see it from all points of view. Also, by explaining your own style to sculptors and such who are interpreting your style, you're kind of breaking down your own work and style in a way that you're not even familiar with. So it brings things to your attention, whether they're good or bad, that you kind of have to be aware of if you want someone else to interpret what you draw correctly.

Actually, it's funny; when I put out this sketchbook some of my colleagues were going, "Boy, are you sure you want to do that? It seems kind of like code book." Because in the action figure section I'm breaking down my style to some degree, and they said, "All your imitators will have

that's not the case with me. But I know how that could be the case for others. I could see how that could be a problem for some people.

Sketch: *So it sounds like, essentially, you go through the same process when creating your covers and pin-ups as you do when creating the sequential pages?*

Jeff: Yeah. Pretty much, yeah. It's just one of those things where to me it always pays to put a little thought into it before you do the final version.

Sketch: *Well, once you have a system like yours down, it's really surprisingly adaptable to whatever you apply it to, too.*

Jeff: Oh, sure. In some cases, too, I'll do a thumbnail for a cover and I will really start getting into the thumbnail and go, "Boy, if I just erase it,

and then clean it up a little bit this'll be perfect!" Sometimes the thumbnail will look just really great, and I'll just blow it up three or four times. And that took me maybe fifteen minutes to do that, and here I've got this whole plan for the cover. It seems to me like some people think that that adds a lot of time, but it really doesn't if you're just in a flow, you know? Like I said, I can do a layout for a cover in fifteen minutes, and then it's at half the size - so I didn't spend the time that I would have to lay out a full cover, and the whole plan's there. It just needs to be transferred.

So I never thought it necessarily added a tremendous amount of time, even though I remember people who go straight to the page would look at me and go, "Man, how can you add all those steps!" [Laughter] It comes naturally after a while; you just don't think about it.

a code book on how to imitate you even better!" [Laughter] And I kind of thought, "You know, that's one way of looking at it." But for me, I'm trying to outpace even my own style. Like I'm trying to stay ahead of myself.

So to me, if somebody figures out those tricks, maybe they were meant to be figured out. Because I should be trying new tricks. I should be trying to do something different anyway. So, to me, that's how I drew two years ago. Hopefully, two years from now I'll be drawing differently, or in a more interesting way, or I will have developed something new. So to me, it's good for me to put those out there, so then I won't rely on them myself. I'll *have* to develop something new now.

Sketch: The other thing, too, is just beyond those people who want to imitate you, it's a great teaching tool for any aspiring artist, a way to help them understand how they can develop their own styles.

Jeff: Exactly. That was the thing, too. I even said this in the beginning of my introduction. I said that, "There's nothing I enjoy looking at more than the sketchbooks of other artists that I admire." Because you're right — it's a *tremendous* learning tool. Even if you don't necessarily want to imitate somebody, just to see their thought process, or a different way of looking at things, is *tremendously* interesting to me. And I do wish other artists would do that sort of thing. I'm actually hoping in some cases — it's certainly not the first sketchbook that somebody has put out there — but the way we put it out there, it's somewhat palatable to a comic book audience [since] it's in a comic book form. And to have so many pages devoted to sketches and stuff like that. I'm hoping that more people will do that type of thing because, like I said, I would love to buy them! [General laughter.]

I'll constantly nag fellow artists that I have been fortunate enough to create a relationship with. I'll constantly nag them saying, "Hey, can we trade, or can I send you some money to send me xeroxes?" I'm constantly pushing people to send me what they have, because I *love* looking at that stuff. I mean, you get so much out it that you can't get sometimes from an artist's finished work, no matter how nice it is. You just see levels in sketches that you can't see any other way. So I hope that there are aspiring artists out there that really, hopefully, get a good buzz off that book in particular.

And I really got a great response on that book too. For somebody who's had kind of a rocky relationship with a lot of fans in the last few years because of the fact that I put some books out late and stuff, that was a very well-received and almost consistently positively-reviewed book. Fans on web pages and message boards just really received that book very positively and in the light that they should have. Because it really was meant to sort of be a "thank you". And also, hopefully, a little bit of an inspiration to any aspiring artists out there, by showing them what you can do, and helping them maybe rethink their own work, and stuff like that. And hopefully to be inspired.

Sketch: Well, who are some of those artists whose sketchbooks you'd like to own? [General laughter.]

Jeff: Well, to this day I'm still a tremendous Art Adams fan. He's still the one that kind of started it off for me, and I still get a tremendous buzz off of the work he does. I think the work he's doing these days is as good as it's ever been. He's just really, *really* great.

STEP-BY-STEP
MAGE KNIGHT

COVER
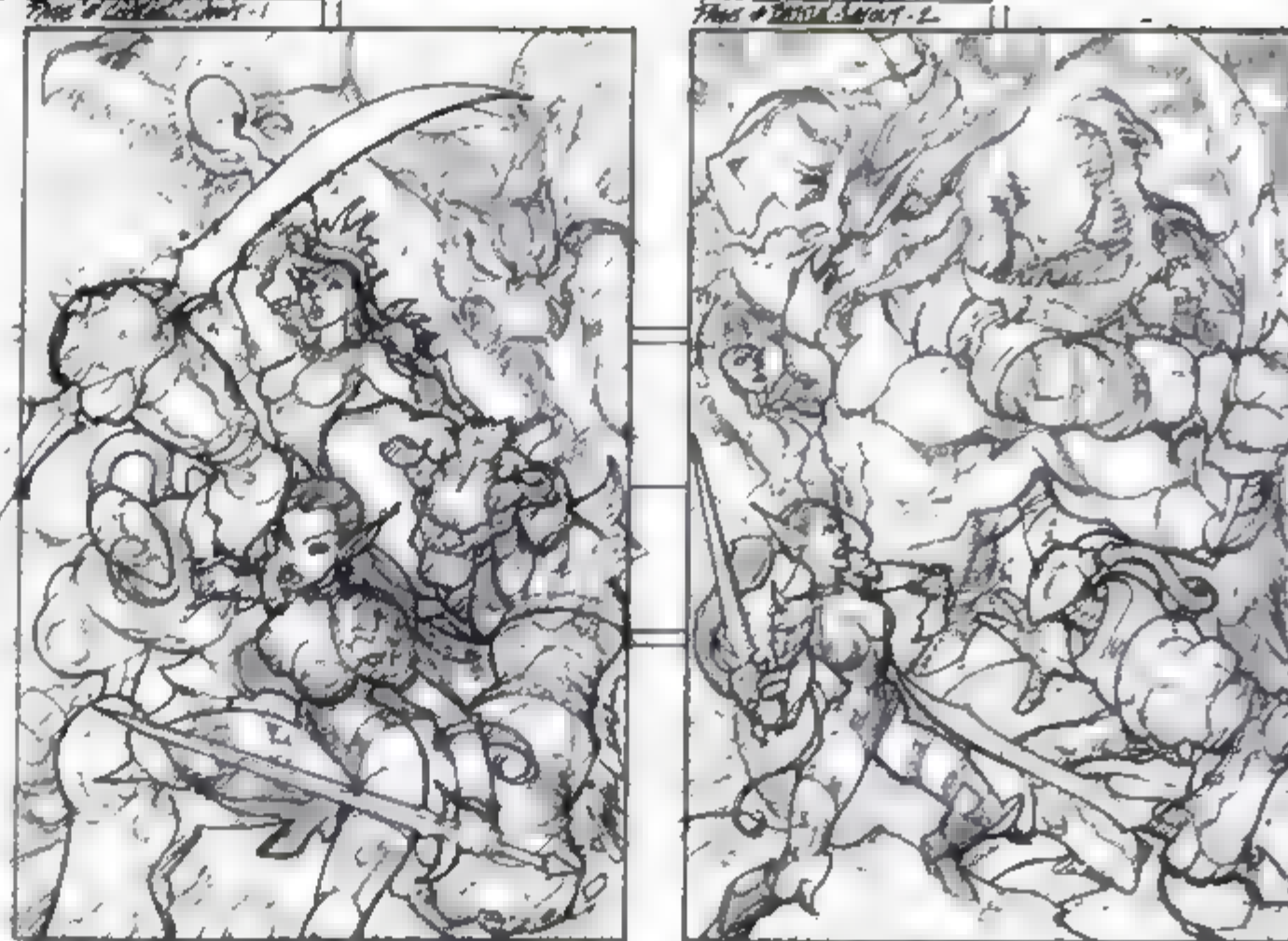
LAYOUTS

FINISHED PENCILS

I *love* Adam Hughes. I was fortunate enough to spend some time with him at the WildStorm studios. He was there for several months working on a *Gen 13* project, and to look over his shoulder and to see the *colossal* amount of sketches that that guy produces; I mean it's amazing! He's another one of these guys that sometimes gets an unfair rap for how much work he produces, but if fans could only see the mountain of sketchbook material that that guy produces. I mean, it's frightening how talented that guy is. But, yeah, he does some really, *really* great stuff.

There's so many, I'm sure I'm going to forget a ton of them, but those are two that pop into my head off the bat. Oh, and Jim Lee. I collected a ton of his sketches. He doesn't do a *lot* of sketching, but whenever he would, when he'd walk away to the bathroom, I'd quickly grab the page and xerox it, just because I sort of wanted to have some sort of documentation of it. [General laughter.]

I keep all these things in binders. I have all these big binders with those plastic sheet protectors, and I just have all different kinds of sketches and stuff that I've collected over the years. Not necessarily sketches that were for me, but xeroxes of sketchbook material and things like that. And it's really great to refer to it. It almost seems like they're one-of-a-kind books that I've created here.

And that's the one thing that I miss out on when I draw here alone, and not in a studio. The kind of traffic you would get from other artists, and people that would come through, and the types of work that you could see; I do miss that aspect of it. I don't get really hardly any of that traffic now, but that was always really, really great.

Sketch: I know that capturing the emotions of the characters is really important to you. When you're working on that, do you look at the entire face, or is there a particular part of the facial anatomy, like the eyes and the mouth, that you really seem to key into?

Jeff: Definitely the eyes and the mouth are probably the most important. I do try to look at the whole face, though. Because the mouth, if you've got somebody who's shocked for instance; it effects the jaw, which opens up, which tightens the face, which shows the cheek bones more. And if the eyes are excited the eyebrows raise, which wrinkles the forehead, which ... I mean it starts a chain reaction, so I guess I do look at the whole face. It's kind of once again the Disney mentality of the "squash and stretch" theory, where you get more out of it if you kind of have everything react.

That's another book, by the way—when we were talking about instructional books; *The Illusion of Life*, the Disney book. One of the very, very early

books I got when I was very young, and to this day is still a tremendous inspiration. The theories that are in that book, I think, apply to comic books as much as anything. And that's also why I push expression so much. Because that animation part of me is kind of coming out, wanting to express as much as I can in every drawing.

And also hands, too. Hands and faces are *so* important in comic books. I mean, if you can't draw good hands and faces, to me, it's not even worth proceeding with the rest because those are the two most important parts of the figure. Hands are just like another feature on the face, in my opinion. If you have a facial expression, and you've got a couple of really good hands to go with it, you're set, you know? [Laughter] So I think hands are as important as anything to get a really good handle on and really strengthen that aspect of your drawing skills.

Sketch: Right. One of the reasons I brought this all up is your mentioning Adam Hughes made me think about something that people often miss in his work. Sure, he does incredibly beautiful women in dynamic, exciting poses. But one thing that's rarely mentioned is his ability to capture, dead on, their emotional state, with both their faces and body language.

Jeff: Absolutely. The posture that you give a character can speak volumes. And it's *amazing* to me how many artists don't even address that in. It seems like they just completely ignore that aspect, or they go through the same three or four poses and

make a career of it. But it's just like, to me, the subtlety that you can get with just subtle expressions, subtle body language, and stuff like that speaks volumes.

That's one thing I got off of Adam. He's a master of subtlety. Having been at Jim Lee's studio, where everybody kind of does the over the top thing, where everybody's over-exaggerated and stuff — which still, to this day, it has a big part in my style — Adam Hughes, I think, his artwork taught me the other aspect; which is what you can do with a minimal amount of lines. What you can do with just a subtle kick of the hips to the side, and just a subtly raised eyebrow, and stuff like that. He gets so much out of so few lines on the page, you know? And they're all very well thought out and meticulously, I'm sure, thought through. But I'm sure it also comes naturally to him, too.

But that's an aspect that I've tried to work into my work more recently in the last few years. To get that sort of subtle, understated quality in my work. It doesn't always have to be over the top. It can sometimes be very subtle and still have the same impact.

Sketch: You've accomplished so much, and in such a relatively short period of time, that I was wondering if you feel that there's much more for you to do professionally? Do you still have some wild dreams of what you'd like to do in this industry — or beyond?

Jeff: I hope so! If anything, the industry's struggling right now has been somewhat of a kick in the pants for me to kind of go, "Hey, you really should try extra hard now, because it's like you can't just sit back and coast in this industry anymore. You really got to put some real effort into it." I mean, I'd like to think I wasn't coasting

BUG LIKE

KINDA CREEPY
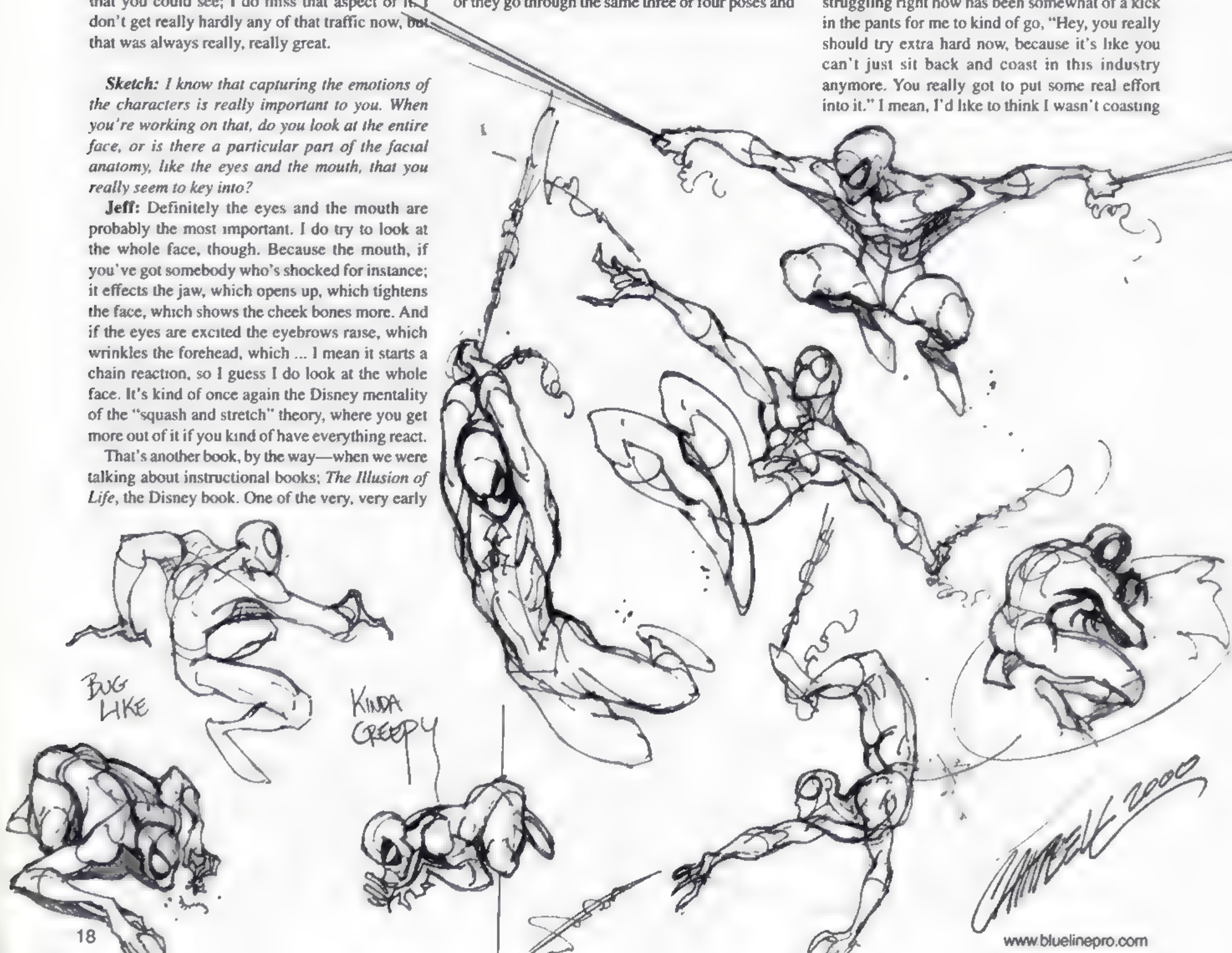
before, but it *definitely* seems like if you want to get people to buy your comics now you've got to try even harder. You've got to put that much more into them. There are also more people that are breathing down your neck to replace you, or take your place, kind of. And I think, yeah, I *have* been fortunate enough to accomplish quite a lot, but at the same time there's so much more that I could be doing. And there's sort of this sense right now of trying to regain a better work ethic, and with my past record of kind of shaky shipping and stuff like that I've definitely set myself the goal of getting the books out in more of a timely manner. Well, there's *so* much I can do better now than I did before. And not just art-wise, but professionally. There's just a lot more that I think I can accomplish and do.

At the same time, too, I kind of feel like in some cases — like myself, and Joe Madureira, and folks like that — we're a generation that's sort of like considered the slacker artist generation, or whatever. [General laughter] But at the same time, I think it's amazing how we have to a certain degree *retained* our popularity. And I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that, despite the appearance of] a lot of great artists that have come out in the last couple of years, that there must be something that we're doing in our style that for some reason isn't being filled in by somebody else. Meaning that's why we still have a crowd or fan base that likes us, because we're giving them something that they can't find someplace else, I think, right now. There's something about our styles, or something that, hopefully, is unique and special about our work. And like I said, it's a goal of mine to continue to create artwork that hopefully is unique and special, something that they can't find from somebody else. Or can't find *exactly* from somebody else. So to me, that's the goal. To hopefully try to continue to be innovative and do something that's special and stands out from the pack.

Sketch: You've talked a couple times about how you'd like to see your work come out as an animated film or TV show. Do you have any interest in directing that, or be really and closely involved in some kind of sense like that?

Jeff: I would like to. It's a real trick to figure out how to do that, I got to say. The people who have accomplished that *need* to write a book. The little bit of Hollywood interaction that we've had with *Danger Girl*, and even *Gen 13* to a certain degree, it always seems they *love* your ideas, but they want to take them and then not have you involved at all. [General laughter] It never makes sense to me. It's like they like you enough, and like your ideas enough, to *buy* them from you, but for some reason they think you have absolutely nothing else that you could possibly bring to the table. So it's kind of strange.

So the answer to your question is, "Yes!" But the question I come up with is, "How?" To me it kind of seems like the episode of *Seinfeld* where George Costanza is trying to figure out what he can do for a living. He's talking to Jerry, and he goes, "I could be a talk show host." And Jerry goes, "Yeah, you could. But how does one become a talk show host?" Or how does one become a sportscaster? It's just one of those things where it's obvious there's many, many steps, and to get there is kind of a tricky thing

So I think it's the same with directing an animated cartoon. I'd say, "Yeah, it's *definitely* in me to do that, and I definitely think I could do it well." The question is how do you get from point A to point Z? There are all these other steps that obviously I've

PETER PARKER

MARY JANE

MYSTERIO

BIG MIKE

DOC OC

8-EYES

SHAGGY "LOU FERRIGNO" HAIR + EYEBROWS "AW YEAH!"

ME HULK

Spider-Man character studies

got to figure out how to do. [General laughter.]

But one thing for sure that I've learned in the last few of years, which is tremendously important as much as it can sometimes be frustrating — it's *so* important to have contacts. It's so important to have people that you know, that you can kind of call and maybe have them help you out once in a while, or say, "Hey, you did this. How did you get there, what did you do?" It's so important to have that [Laughter] Unfortunately, that seems to be almost as important as just having good talent, you know? So you almost need that secondary talent of just being able to work the system, or at least knock on the right doors, or make the right phone calls.

Sketch: Do you have any particular suggestions for those readers out there who are looking at what you've accomplished and are thinking to themselves, "I'd like to do something like that?"

Jeff: That's a good question. You know, I once got myself into trouble for answering that question. Because I said once that — this is maybe a year or two ago, I can't remember where I said it, but it got a bad reaction on the internet

or something. But I said something to the degree that if you wanted to become a comic artist, unless you're like just *dying* to become a comic artist — like with the biggest love of it; you love nothing else but comic books and you're just dying to do it, you've got nothing but energy to do comic books – unless you fit in that category, you shouldn't become one. And some people reacted really badly, like that was me telling them they shouldn't even try to get into this industry. Which wasn't true. It's similar to a George Lucas statement I heard once where he said that he had to be totally and completely in love with *Star Wars* because it was going to totally and completely consume his life for the next nine years. And that's the thing with creating comic books, because it takes so much work and devotion and it's so all encompassing and laborious that you have to have this insane love for the profession.

Somebody also once said that to be a comic book artist you've got to be the director, the set designer, the actors, the costume designer, the lighting guy, the ... [Laughter] You're this jack of all trades! It's *tremendously* draining in some cases. And to do it as often as you have to do it

Planet of the Apes
cover layout

Codename: Knockout cover layouts

Buffy character sketch

to sort of to do well in this industry, *especially* in this climate. To sell the kind of comics you have to sell to do well financially for yourself, it's just a *tremendous* amount of work. And a lot of luck. So it's one of those things where I would definitely encourage somebody to do it, but they've just got to have a crazy amount of energy. They've got to have a passion for it that's unlike anything else they can think of, because of just the labor and the work that you've got to put into it.

And it definitely pays to have some sort of talent, I think, because you don't want to struggle in this industry too much. You want to have talent that, hopefully, is going to be appreciated. And something special that you're bringing to the table. There are a lot of artists that we see at comic book conventions that are very talented, but at the same time, they're not giving us something *new*. They're not giving us something that's going to make them stand out from the pack. And sometimes that's what you need to really do well in this business. It's not just talent; it's something that you can do that's *different*, something that makes you *unique*. Because I think this is a business that definitely thrives on the uniqueness of different creators. You know, sometimes artists that aren't even the best artists do very well in this industry — not necessarily because they're great artists, but they just have a unique style. They have something that's making them stand out that's appealing to a certain demographic that will seek them out. And sometimes you have artists who have more talent that aren't getting that much attention. And I'm sure it must be frustrating, but, like I said, you have an industry that really thrives on and encourages unique visions, and I think you really have to bring something unique to the table if you're going to thrive in this industry.

Sketch: Yeah, it gets right back to the idea that, aside from having the drive and

determination to find that job, you have to apply the same rigor to the work of discovering your own personal vision, too.

Jeff: Exactly. Sometimes you're pulled into or put into a box, or a niche is created for you. Which isn't really a *bad* thing. I mean, sometimes I know in the music industry people are like, "I don't want to be put in a box, man. My music is my music!" or something like that. But when it comes to art, sometimes a niche is a good thing. You know we mentioned Adam Hughes, and he's part of a group I think — myself included — people would call "good girl artists" or "babe artists" you know? And with Joe Mad or Humberto Ramos, my colleagues at Cliffhanger, somebody would say that they were "anime influenced" artists — you know, they have an animation look, like a Japanese animation look. And you know, sometimes getting put into some kind of clique like that, or something that people identify as your type of art work, it *isn't* necessarily a *bad* thing. It can kind of be good, because it helps to create that identity that you're creating, you know? At the same time, if you don't try to push those boundaries, you can easily be forgotten.

But like I said, I don't think it's necessarily a bad thing to sort of say, "Well, I'm going to set out to be *this* type of guy," or, "I want to be known for *this*." Sometimes that's a good kick-start to creating that look that you're looking for. Some guys, maybe they're like, "Oh, I want to be the guy who draws really great robots. And then I'll get *Iron Man*, and then I'll be known as "the Iron Man guy" because I draw great robots!" Sometimes you can have a career that way, you know? Or, "I'm the great guy at drawing monsters, so I'm going to make a reputation for myself, and then get hooked up on a good monster book and go from there." [General laughter] That sometimes seems silly, but it's real easy to break down anyone who's successful like that.
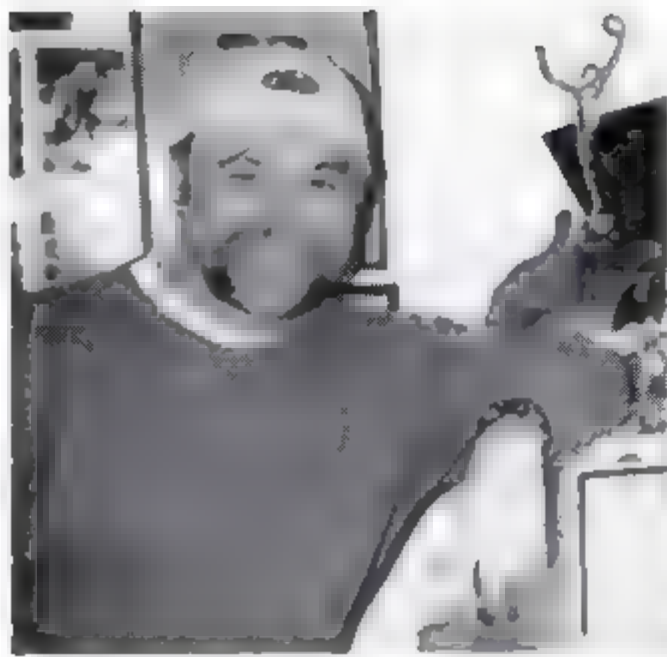
BEAU SMITH
From The Ranch
Are You Fit To Print?

The life of a freelancer is a strange one. One that your friends and relatives in the "outside world" might not understand.

I remember back about fifteen years ago when I first started out doing the freelance thing. It was...well.. different. I had to give myself a crash course on self-discipline. I decided to keep up the habits I had embraced most of my work life. I still set my alarm clock. I still got up and took a shower and got dressed. Granted, I was no longer wearing a shirt and tie, but still enough clothes to go into the real world and not scare anyone.

I worked out of my house that first year. I remember that my neighbors thought I had turned into some sorta drug dealer or was engaged in some illegal import/export business. Fed Ex, UPS, the mail truck...would all come by during the day and drop off mysterious packages. Now and then a freelancer or someone from the distribution game would come by.... being they were comic book people they looked liked aliens to my Docker wearing, grass cutting, soccer driving neighbors. I'm sure they had pity for my hard working wife that left the house every morning and went to a real job...while I stayed encased within the fortress of freelance, doing who knows what kinda evil things.

After a year I had to seek out a large office space outside the house. By then the house was packed with office equipment and too many boxes of books. I didn't realize it then, but getting out was a good thing.

But for those of you that still work in your house, I have a few suggestions that'll help you stay a freelancer, and not have to return to the "real world" and working a job you're not very fond of.

Here are a few rules that I suggest you follow:

Exercise!

That's right...I said exercise. Nothing huge that takes up a bunch of time, but a few things that will help you from becoming the stereotype of every comic book freelancer, retailer, and Star Trek fan that has ever been abused by the media. These are low cost things to do.

A. *Walk.* Depending on how in or out of shape you are.... go outside and *walk for twenty minutes* Monday through Friday. That could be ten minutes up and ten minutes back. Walk .ya don't have to run A nice brisk walk will do the trick. Yeah, sweetheart...I know that it might be kinda hot one day or really cold another. There might be some rain or snow...so what? Suck it up. You won't melt. There are raincoats, over coats, and other such aids to help you against the elements. Twenty minutes out of your workday is nothing. Do it! Depending on your physical shape you could do more, or even a little less. You're supposed to be an adult...figure that part out. You'll be surprised how much different you'll feel in a month. Try and do it the same time everyday. That way it becomes a habit and your nimble little mind gets used to it. Cost: FREE.

B. *Lift weights.* Quit cryin'! I'm not gonna tell you that you have to lift a truck and look like Stallone in his prime. I'm talking about body tone. Lifting that little drawing pencil ain't gonna do it. Tapping that computer keyboard isn't gonna help your chest and arms either. Go to your local Wal-Mart, sporting goods store, or retail outlet that has a sporting goods dept. Buy two 15-20 lb. dumbbells...no....I'm not talking about the guys that run Marvel Comics...they weigh lots more than that. These are two items that you can keep in your studio, and they won't take up much room at all Three days a week you can do a few simple exercises that will tone up those jiggling things you call arms.

Starting out I suggest you do three sets of ten reps. Stand with a dumbbell in each hand. Palms facing each leg. As you pull up to your shoulder your forearm will turn as you come up, and turn as you bring it back down. This is great not only for the biceps, but for the forearm as well. Do left then right, left, then right. Don't do them both at the same time.

Depending on what's comfortable for you, you can also do "flys." You hold the weights in front of you at crotch level and then slowly bring them up like a bird trying to flap its wings Three sets of ten here as well. Great for the shoulders and arms. There are many more things you can do if you like. I would also suggest buying a book or checking the internet for sites that can show you other time-easy exercises to do. I also suggest doing a few old fashioned sits ups and push-ups. Start out trying to make ten to fifteen push ups your goal. Do as many as you can. You'll find that you'll slowly be able to build up to ten or fifteen in no time. Same with sit-ups. Do as many as you can starting out. Soon you'll find a good number that fits you time and stress-wise. Price· Dumbbells around $7.95 to $10.00 each. Sit ups & push-ups: FREE.

C. *Diet.* Now...if you're really skinny you don't have to follow through on this as much as someone that is carrying around a couple of saddlebags made of lard. But...if you're like most of the folks in America...you've been wearing the Burger King feed bag a little too long. Starting out, try and ease into a small change.

Breakfast: Lay off the coffee and Mountain Dew. You're smart enough to know this stuff is no good for ya. I learned the hard way to lay off the Hostess Twinkies and cupcakes The cereal that is locked in a cocoon of sugar will get ya too. Sausage, gravy, eggs, and biscuits the size of your head are red flags as well. Remember.... the breakfast foods at the fast food places will get ya nowhere fast...except maybe for the heart attack hall of fame or the dia-

betes dance hall. If ya have to have that stuff then do it on the weekends. For the five work days try and eat a little healthier. It's better if you ease into it. That way your mind doesn't hate the food or the way you have to eat it. Here are just a couple of small suggestions for starting out.

A plain bagel or whole wheat. If ya gotta smear something on it, make sure it's fat free or reduced fat. Any fruit. Bananas, apples, grapes...etc. Drink orange juice or low fat milk. Turkey bacon is good if ya gotta have some meat. Cereal...well, there are loads of low fat healthy cereals out there. You may have to try a few to see what one you like best. Use low fat milk with it.

Lunch: Subway low fat sandwiches. The ads make sense and you have a variety to choose from. If you don't wanna travel you can make up your own Subway style sandwiches at home. Go to the store and get the right stuff. Baked chips instead of the ones loaded with heart failing fat. Eat a salad with bits of turkey, fish, or ham in it. Low fat ham...of course. If you have to drink soda...then get diet soda. Water is my choice. There are lots of sugar free and low fat cookies out there now. They taste just like the real stuff. Check em out.

Snacks: Fruits, veggies with low fat dip. Pretzels, yogurt; there are lots of low fat treats at the store...go check em' out.

Dinner: Stay away from the fried stuff. Lay off the non-lean meat. Fish and Fowl are a good way to go. Veggies...steam 'em,

raw, cook with 'em. Many different ways to spruce 'em up. Just use your head. Read labels. Keep a low sugar, low fat menu in your head. You don't have to starve yourself, just cut back and be smart.

Some of the fast food joints have gotten better about low fat and healthy food. Wendy's has some great salads. I've already mentioned Subway. Arby's market fresh sandwiches are not bad. Plus most places now have salads. So eating on the go is no wimp-out anymore. Ya got choices.

As a freelancer you should still try and keep some decent work hours. More times than not your editor will be working close to nine to five. Why not you? Most guys when they go freelance think it's wonderful to stay up all night and then sleep late during the day. That'll get ya nothing but less work. Besides...you're not a little kid anymore. Act like a man...or a real bossy woman. Try and stay human. Trust me, there's no mystique with the coffee drinkin', messed up hair, torn t-shirt image of the 1980s freelancer. That's just a lazy slob tryin' to say, "I'm creative." Naw, you're just lazy. There's no romantic image of a freelancer anymore. If you do you work and do it when the rest of the human race is at the grindstone, then you can kiss those vampire hours goodbye. Because just like a vampire...they suck!

Now some of you that have known me or my rep for a while are askin', "Hey,

Beau. I thought you were a real man? I thought you had beer with every meal and for snacks, laid out all night bustin' heads and slept it off the next day?"

Well, amigos....yeah.... I used to be like that. Then one day two years ago at my annual check up the doctor told me I had Type 2 Diabetes. For those of you that don't know, Diabetes is one of the top six killers of people in the world. Granted, I always like to fight the best, but this was a bit more than bustin' somebody's irate husband over the head with a beer bottle. Diabetes can cause ya to go blind...that means no more eyeballin' pretty women and readin' comic books. It can cause you to get toes, feet, legs, and things like cut off. I find that it's hard to kick somebody's butt if you don't have a foot to do it with. Then there's the matter of a stroke or a heart attack. I like to give 'em to others, not get 'em.

So I became the poster boy for diabetes. Within two months I dropped thirty pounds, walked three miles every day, swam most every day in the summer, lifted a few weights three days a week, and started eatin' right. Hell, I even drink lite beer now. My blood sugar levels are normal. I test it every day or more.

Geez.... I'm startin' to sound like a younger Wilford Brimley.

Anyway, what I'm tellin' you is not to walk down that same path as me. Learn by my mistakes. I figure the longer I live the more people I can torment. Havin' me around for a long time is a good thing. Don't let anyone tell you different.

I want you also to realize that I am not any kinda doctor. Before you start any exercise plan check with your real doctor. Same way with any lifestyle change. Always look to the experts first.

That's about it. I'm gonna let you take charge of your life now. See what you can make of it.

As always, if you have any questions, stories, or photos of Texas Cheerleaders send 'em to me here at the ranch.

Beau Smith
The Flying Fist Ranch
P.O. Box 706
Ceredo, WV 25507
beausmith2@earthlink.net

Adios for now,
Beau

CHUCK DIXON
Fox. Crow. Tree. House.
# Working Inside a Framework

This will wind up having to do with comics writing. Trust me.

Way back in the '40s, Columbia Pictures started up an animation wing like the one Warners and MGM had. Studio head Harry Cohn was looking for another Tom and Jerry or Bugs Bunny to bring audiences (and merchandising deals) in. He raided the other animation houses for talent and cranked out some seven-minute shorts. None of them took off as cartoons. But one of the properties was the basis for a long-running comic book success story.

Although they only appeared in a handful of cartoons, DC Comics licensed Fox and Crow for comic books. They initially appeared in *Comic Cavalcade*, a collection of funny animals that were instantly forgettable. Tito and his Burrito were not breakout hits.

But Fox and Crow were. They would appear in *Cavalcade*, *Real Screen Comics*, and finally their very own title. They'd run for close to twenty years. Hundreds of stories. Thousands of pages.

All done by the same two guys. One writer. One artist. Twenty years of comics.
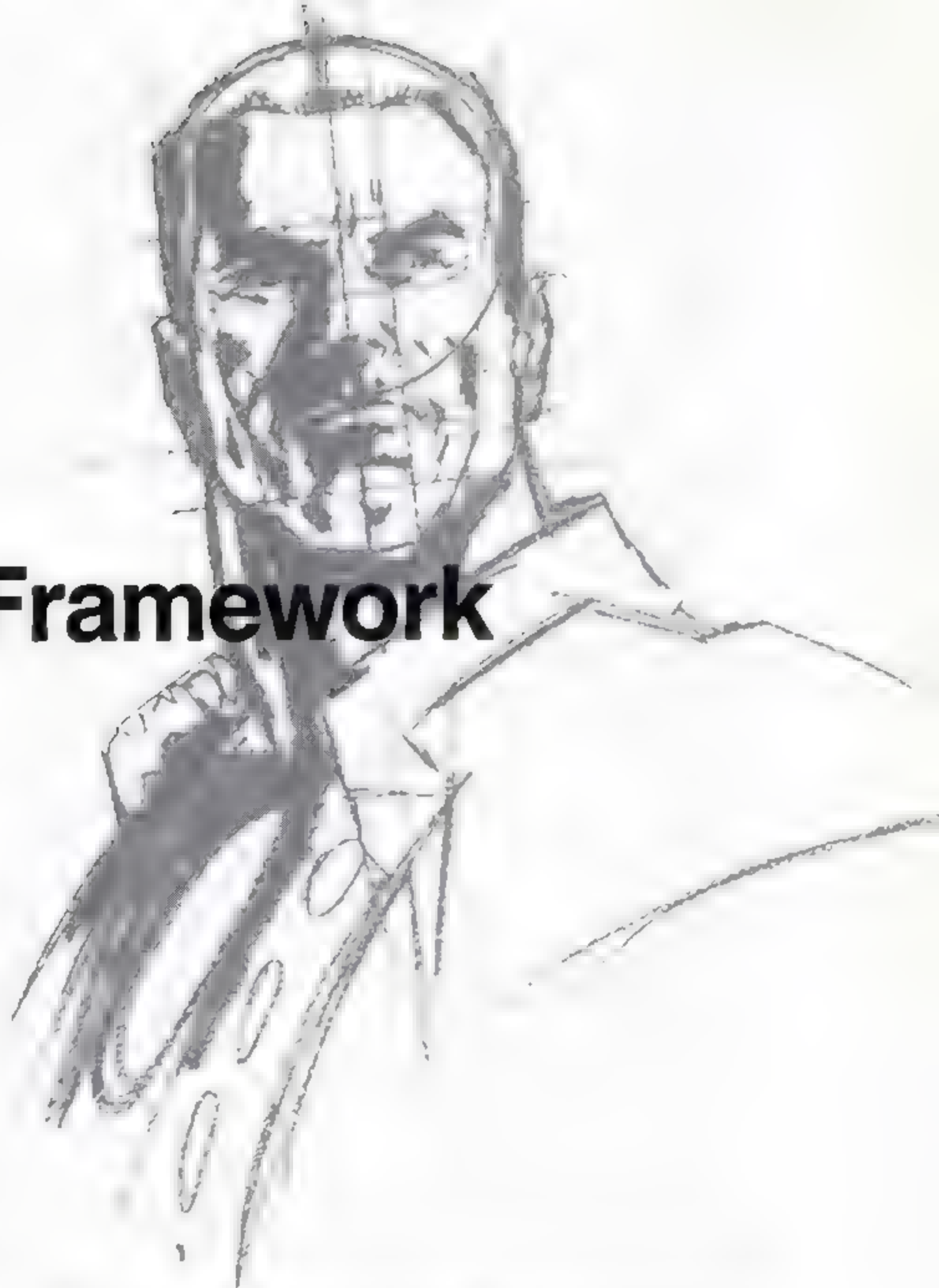
And what staggeringly original concept kept this series running for two decades with enough creative possibilities to keep two guys cranking for all that time?

Well, the high concept was, Fauntleroy Fox lived in his little suburban home and was fussy and excitable in the Felix Ungar mode. Crawford Crow, a cigar chomping, derby wearing, (he called it a "doiby") miscreant lived in the tree in front of Fox's house. Almost every story would feature the Crow tricking the Fox in some way; finagling food, money or other goods from his neighbor.

That's it. Two characters and a single setting. Pretty dull stuff, huh?

But you don't run that long without something to recommend you. The stories were fast paced, fresh and irreverent. The Crow was truly inventive in the ways he would con the Fox. One story even made fun of the Crow's endless craftiness by showing him going through stacks of Fox and Crow comics looking for gags he could re-use. The gag is that the writers never repeated themselves. The stories endlessly explored this simplest of concepts without re-treading a single one.

So, this is why I get kind of crisped when I see one of my fellow writers leaving a book after a run of issues because he's "burnt out" or "told all his stories."

Or this one: a writer decides after a bit that a character is stale or "it's all been done." And he takes a book that's been around for decades and makes a screaming left turn with it.

Problem is, if a character or book has been around twenty years or more then it stands to reason that its core concept is sound. Each decade added to its existence just bears this out. If

Art by Scot Eaton, SIGIL © and ™ CrossGeneration Comics.

you can't come up with a new take on the character without changing its basic premise than there's something wrong with *you*. Or maybe you simply have no feel for that particular character.

Take a certain arachnid-inspired webspinning character for example. The makers of the recent blockbuster movie wisely returned to the source material for this character and ignored years and years of tortured and confusing continuity. These years of abuse by editors and writers left the friendly neighborhood superhero so far from his core creation that, except for his costume, he was virtually unrecognizable.

I've taken on my share of icon characters. Some are sixty years plus in age. I was often asked if I didn't think this character was past its prime or due for some re-tooling. And how the heck did I come up with new ideas when it had all been done before.

But what some don't look at is that these icons are established and well loved. You come on a book like *Superman* or *Batman* or *The Incredible Hulk* and your audience is ready-made. They know the character. Now they want to see what you'll do with it. If you stray too far from what they expect they'll hate you for it. If you just re-tread old ideas they'll probably hate you more (though you'll probably be nominated for an Eisner).

Today's readers are so demanding that you can play on their willingness to believe you're going to screw up. Take a character or story in an unexpected direction and they'll anticipate you falling flat on your face. Then you can prove them wrong by pulling out of what looked like a nosedive in the final seconds.

An example of this was the Dick Grayson/Barbara Gordon romance. This one came out of nowhere for most fans, but was a logical result of the characters' longtime relationship. After howls of protest most readers were won over, and the romance subplot was a driving force in all three of the books I was writing for DC at the time. Fans who initially hated the idea later admitted that these were some of their favorite stories. Don't believe me? Check out the prices for *Birds of Prey* #8 on eBay; possibly the most under-printed comic in recent DC history.

What you have to do is exceed the reader's expectations. Give 'em what they want, but not in the way they expected it. When I was on *Robin* I often took the character to places in his relationship with Batman that made some longtime readers nuts. I'd have Tim Drake defy the Dark Knight's edicts or keep secrets from his mentor. But all of this was kept within the confines of Tim's character and the classic Batman and Robin model, and at the end of the day (or after several arcs) it was all resolved.

So, why doesn't staying within a framework create stale characters after decades-long runs? Because most successful characters are multi-faceted and deep enough to allow for many variations in their interpretation.

Batman is the best example. Dozens and dozens of creators have portrayed him as everything from a boy scout to a space traveler to a demented urban vigilante. And all of those versions are correct because they stay within the framework of the original character. They weretrue to the core of what made Batman popular to millions of readers around the world.

Fox. Crow. Tree. House.

It's not rocket science.

Art by Scot Eaton, SIGIL © and ™ CrossGeneration Comics.

Blue Line Pro

WWW.BLUELINEPRO.COM - WWW.BLPCOMICS.COM

COMIC BOOK
ART BOARDS

EXCLUSIVE
ART PAPERS

BLP COMICS

ART TOOLS
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ART BOOKS

BLP FONTS

SKETCH MAGAZINE
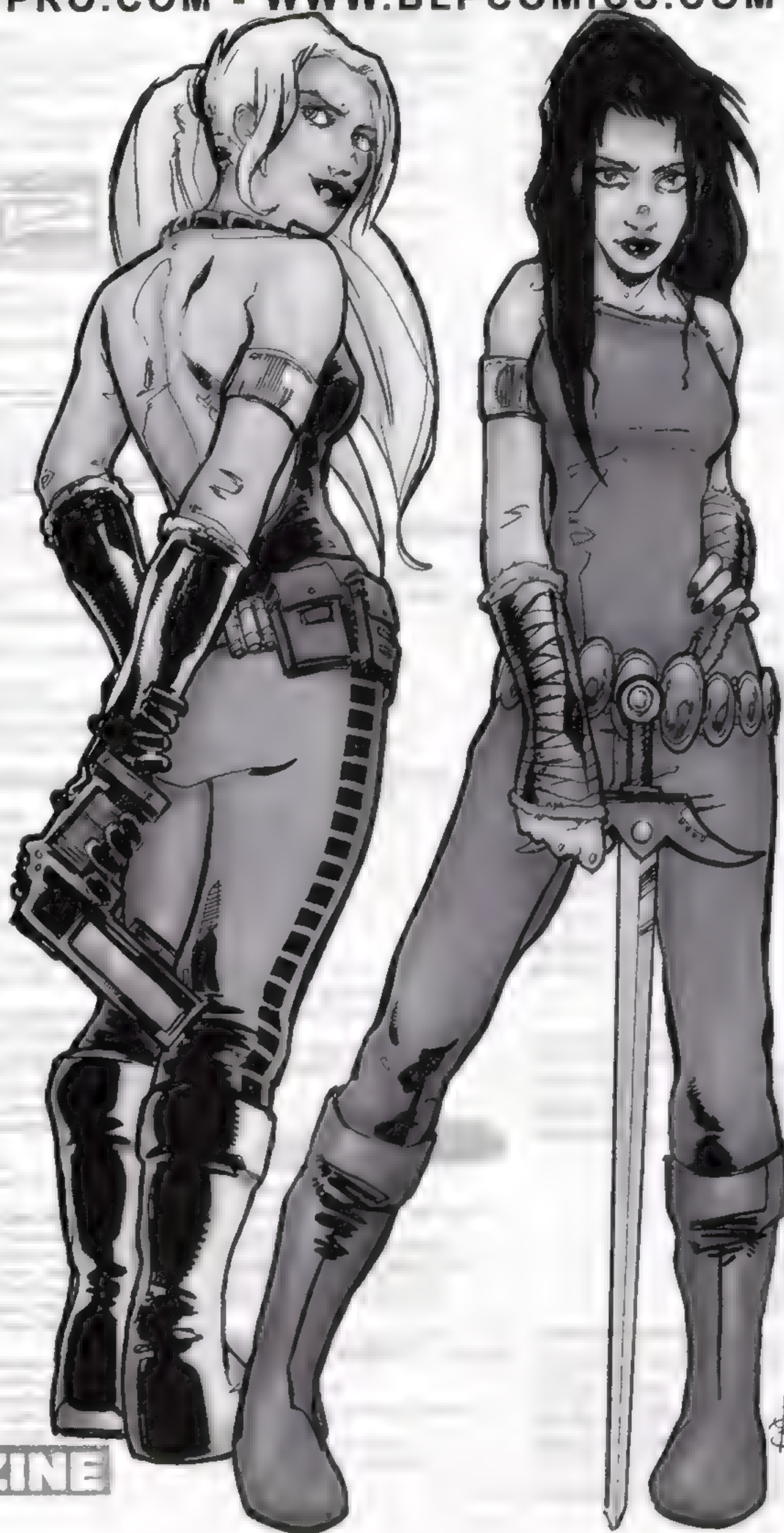
COMIC BOOK ART BOARDS

Full Trim Format Art Boards

PLY
Ply is the thickness of the paper. A 2 ply paper has two pieces of paper pressed together and a 3 ply has 3 pieces of paper pressed together which is thicker than 2 ply.

Traditional Format Art Boards
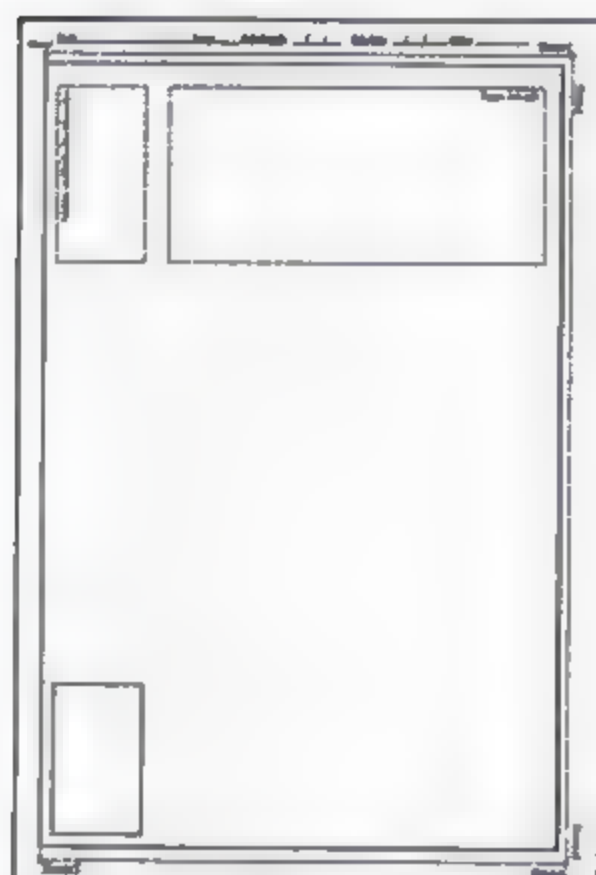
Cover Sheets

Blue Line now offers comic artist an full trim comic book board to draw your comics. Just recently comic book publishers have been using full trim comic book boards to draw their comics. Blue Line has designed a full trim page that fits most requirements for full bleed comics, but can also be used to draw traditional comic book page formats. Special dotted borders helps the artist to keep the important illustrations within an area to be sure it's not lost to trimming.

PREMIERE300 (STRATHMORE)
300 Series Full Trim Format
PRO 300 Series Comic Book Boards is an economical heavyweight paper. Like the rest of the Blue Line products the Pro 300 Series is pre-printed with a non-photo blue border that allows the artist to draw comics the actual size that professionals do.
• **PRO 300 Series (SMOOTH)** surface is a 100lb. 100% acid free board. This Strathmore board is ideal for pen ink work and is also suited for pencil and marker.
- ITEM# BL1041 *SRP $17.00*
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/bagged
• **PRO 300 Series (REGULAR)** toothy surface is a 100lb. 100% acid free board. This Strathmore board works well with pencils, charcoal and watercolor.
- ITEM# BL1042 *SRP $17.00*
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/bagged

PREMIERE400 (STRATHMORE)
400 Series Full Trim Format
400 Series already has a very serious history. Comic Book Boards 400 series is printed on the finest art paper available, Strathmore. Like the rest of the Blue Line products the 400 Series is preprinted with a non-photo blue border that allows the artist to draw comics the actual size that professionals draw.
• **S400 Series (SMOOTH)** surface is a 100% acid free bristol. This Strathmore board is ideal for detailed ink work and is also suited for pencil and marker.
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/bagged.
- ITEM# BL1043 SMOOTH 2-PLY *SRP $19.00*
- ITEM# BL1045 SMOOTH 3-PLY *SRP $28.00*
• **S400 Series (REGULAR)** toothy surface is a 100% acid free bristol. This Strathmore board works well with pencils, inks, charcoal and pastel.
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/bagged
- ITEM# BL1044 REGUALR 2-PLY *SRP $19.00*
- ITEM# BL1046 REGULAR 3-PLY *SRP $28.00*

PREMIERE500 (STRATHMORE)
500 Series Full Trim Format
500 series comic book boards is the top of the line for art paper. Strathmore 500 is 100% cotton fiber, Acid free and unsurpassed for fine pen and pencil work.
• **500 Series (SMOOTH)** surface is a 100% cotton fiber acid free board. This Strathmore board is ideal for pen ink work and is also suited for pencil and marker.
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/bagged.
- ITEM# BL1047 SMOOTH 2-PLY *SRP $41.00*
- ITEM# BL1049 SMOOTH 3-PLY *SRP $57.75*
• **500 Series (REGULAR)** toothy surface is a 100% cotton fiber acid free board. This Strathmore board works well with pencils, charcoal and watercolor.
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area/bagged.
- ITEM# BL1048 REGULAR 2-PLY *SRP $41.00*
- ITEM# BL1050 REGULAR 3-PLY *SRP $57.75*

PRO COMIC BOOK ART BOARDS
FULL TRIM FORMAT
Blue Line has taken the quality paper that they have used in the "Pro" pages for years and printed a newly designed Full Trim border format in non-photo blue ink.
This offering the artist the quality of Pro pages with an advanced page border.
In addition, each pack also includes one page of Blue Line Comic Book Cover Sheets, specifically laid out with a larger image area for standard comic book cover designs.
Use pencil, ink (brush recommened), markers, wash, acrylics
- ITEM# BL1038 *SRP $15.95*
24 pages per pack
11" x 17" 3- ply brite art boards with a 15 3/4" x 10 3/8" image border with a 9" x 13 3/4" safe area dotted border area and 1 Cover Sheet with 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo border printed/ bagged.

PRO COMIC BOOK ART BOARDS
TRADITIONAL FORMAT
Pro Comic Book Boards brite white surface offers a smooth surface to pencils and inking with a brush literally glides across the surface (quill pen not recommended). Pro has offered thousands of artist the opportunity to begin their careers on a pre-printed boards like the professional publisher uses.
Traditional Format has the original 10" x 15" image border with panel markers for a traditional page layout.
Page size is 11" x 17" with a non-photo blue image area of 10" x 15". In addition, each pack also includes one page of Blue Line Comic Book Cover Sheets, specifically laid out with a larger image area for standard comic book cover designs.
Use pencil, ink (brush recommened), markers, wash, acrylics
- ITEM# BL1001 *SRP $15.95*
24 pages per pack.
11" x 17" 3- ply brite art boards with a 10" x 15" non-photo image printed and 1 Cover Sheet with 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo image printed/bagged

COMIC BOOK BOARDS
(*Traditional Format*)
Comic Book Boards are specifically laid out with an image area for standard comic book designs. These boards like the other comic book boards offer an area to write the name of the book the artist is drawing, issue number, page number and date. This helps to keep track of your boards and where they belong. Double page spreads are a snap for an artist. Just take two comic book boards and then butt the sides together, apply tape down the back of those boards and then the artist is ready to illustrate a double-page drawing. Fast and easy with no cutting. They are 24 pages of Brite Art Index. Page size is 11" x 17" with a non-photo blue image area of 10" x 15".
Use pencil, ink (brush), marker, wash.
- ITEM# BL1003 *SRP $12.95*
24 pages per pack
11" x 17" pages with a 10" x 15" non-photo image/ bagged

COMIC BOOK COVER SHEETS
These Comic Book Cover Sheets, show a border for your drawing with pre-marked bleeds for trimming with an area for the possible placement for the book's logo and company information clearly marked. This helps to keep all of the important elements of the covers from being covered up when the book logo and company info are placed later. They are 12 pages of 2-ply premium Brite art index board that come bagged and feature non-photo blue ink. Page size is 11" x 17" with an image area of 10 3/4" x 16".
- ITEM# BL1007 *SRP $9.95*
12 pages per pack
11" x 17" art pages printed with a 10 3/4" x 16" non-photo blue border printed/ bagged.
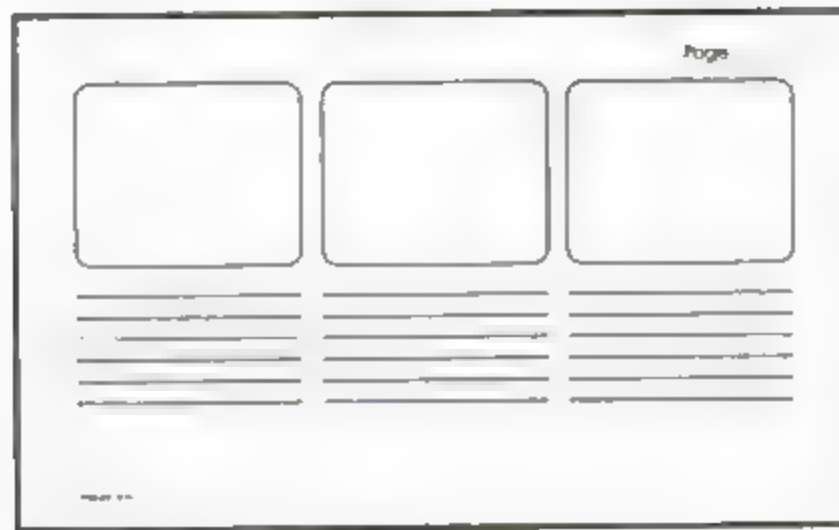
STORYBOARD TEMPLATES

Animators and Storyboard artist! Blue Line Storyboard Templates offers animators and writers a quick and easy way to show movement and sequences of a story or animation.

Storyboard Templates have three large panels with lines below each for detailed art and storytelling.

- ITEM# BL1018 *SRP $13.95*

100 sheets of 60 lb. 8 1/2 x 14 pages with 3 panels padded with colored cover.

COMIC STRIP ART BOARDS

Blue Line Pro COMIC STRIP ART BOARDS offer comic strip illustrators an easy and time saving way to create professional looking comic strips. Printed on Blue Line Pro's Premiere (Strathmore) 300 series smooth with a non-photo blue border. Daily comic strip borders measure 4 1/16" x 13". This offers the illustrator the ability to reduce the original at a 44% reduction to the standard daily strip size. Sunday comic strip borders have two sizes· the first is a large format of 5 3/8" x 11 1/2" and the second format of 3 3/4" x 11 1/2". The Sunday strips are drawn at the size they are published and usual have two rows of panels. Each strip offers basic border formats for four and three panels and Sundays allow for additional rows.

BLP COMIC STRIP ART BOARDS 12 Daily Comic Strips and 2 Sunday Comic Strips.

- ITEM # BL1052 *SRP #12.95*

POCKET SKETCH PAD

50 pages of heavy illustration board to carry around in your pocket to have ready when your hit with a revolutionary vision. Great for quick sketches and designs. Featuring Blue Line's quality illustration paper.

Great for pencilling, inking and washes

50 pages / 5" x 9 1/2" / padded / two-color cover

- Item # BL1051 *SRP $5.95*
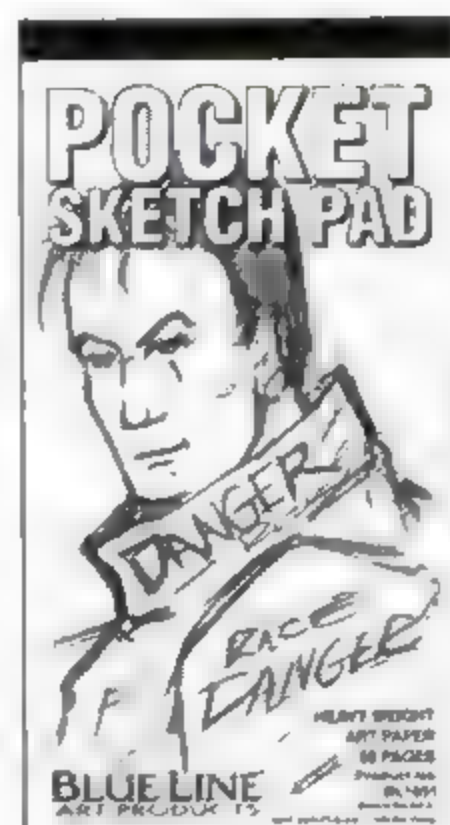
LAYOUT PAGES

Comic Book Layout Pages uses premium bond paper and printed in non-photo blue, of course, features markings to layout four thumbnails per sheet to detail your comic book page ideas and room for notations and other information.

Used for story boarding your comic book story. A geat tool for artists or writers to work out details for the story along with layouts of pages.

- ITEM# BL1005 *SRP $8.95*

30 8 1/2" x 11" pages printed in non-photo blue/ bagged.
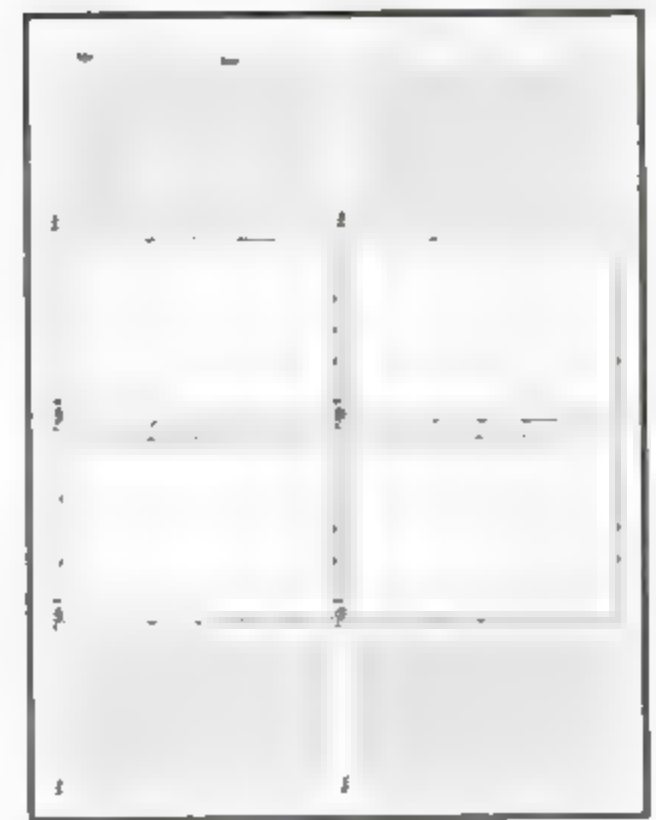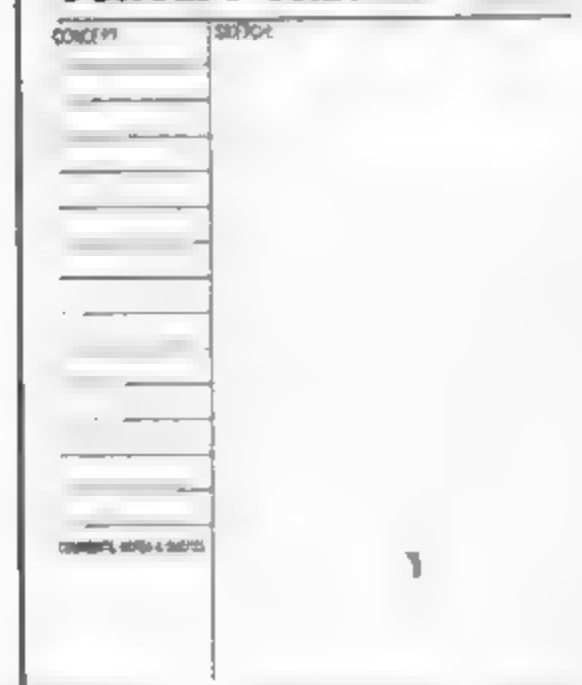
CONCEPT SKETCH PAGES

Record and organize your creative ideas on a convenient, quality art board. Concept Sketch Pages are made from premium index board featuring non-photo blue ink so that the artist can ink his illustrations on a non-repro surface. Concept Sketch Pages offer an image area for an illustrator to draw a character scene or anything. And, it also gives room for written information to be included with the artwork. This is handy when a character is designed for a comic book and you want to include his bio, powers, etc., or a Role Playing character you're playing. These pages can easily be hole punched and inserted into a binder. A character template is even included for quick and easy character creations!

- ITEM# BL1004 *SRP $8.95*

25 art pages printed in non-photo blue/ bagged.

BLUE LINE SAMPLER II

If you haven't tried Blue Line products, here's your chance! The Blue Line Sampler includes 4-Comic Book Pages, 4-Concept Sketch Pages, 3-Comic Book Cover Sheets, 3- Layout Pages, 3-Pro Comic Book Pages, 3-Storyboard Templates, 3-Full Bleed Pro C.B. Pages, 1- Strathmore 300 smooth, 1- Strathmore 300 regular. All in non-photo blue, of course! That's 25 pages of five different Blue Line products! Check out all Blue Line and Blue Line Pro products in one fell swoop!

- ITEM# BL1040 *SRP $13.95*

25 pages of 8 different Blue Line products. 4-Comic Book Pages, 4-Concept Sketch Pages, 3-Comic Book Cover Sheets, 3- Layout Pages, 3-Pro Comic Book Pages, 3-Storyboard Templates, 3-Full Bleed Pro C.B. Pages. 1- Strathmore 300 smooth, 1- Strathmore 300 regular. 25 pages per pack.
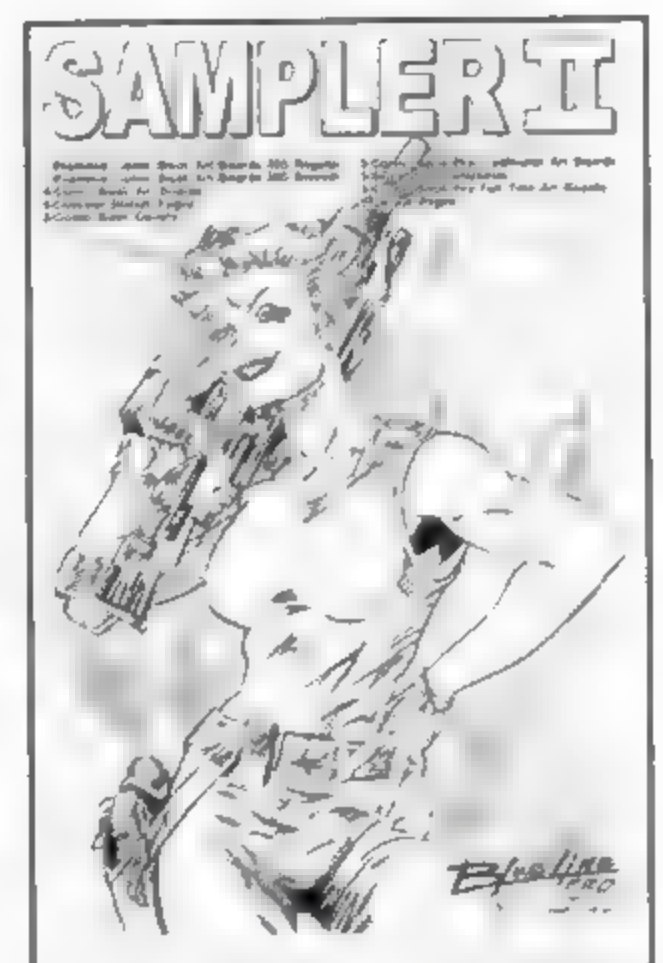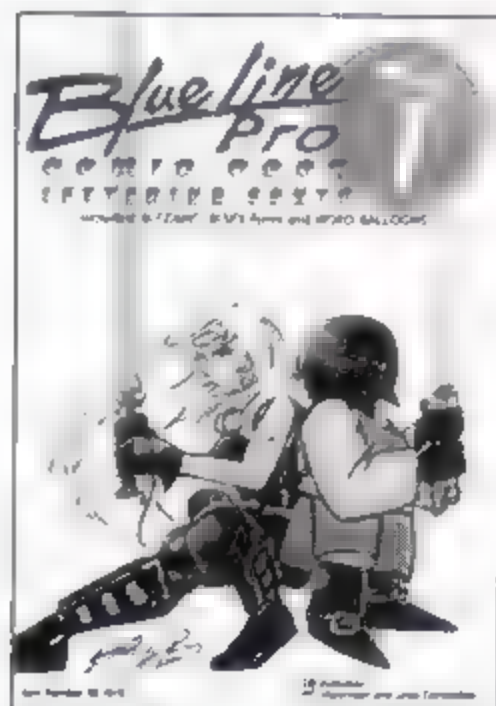
BLUE LINE COMIC BOOK LETTERING FONT

SERIES 1

BLCOMIC FONT:

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
1234667890

Blue Line now offers creators an inexpensive lettering font.

BLCOMIC font is formatted for Macintosh and PC Compatibles in a TruType format. **BLSFX** is a special effects font with pre-created sound effects that are ready for you to drop into place.

Also included is user configurable word balloons in .eps format.

Blue Line Pro's Comic Book Font Vol. 1
- **ITEM# BL1019** - **SRP $19.95**

SERIES 2

DIGITALCARTOON-Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?.,.([0())/ $ *+=-
DIGITALCARTOON-Italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?.,.([0())/ $ *+=-
DIGITALCARTOON-Italic Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?.,.[0())/ $ *+=-
DIGITALCARTOON-Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?.,.([0())/ $ *+=-

SACREDBLUE-Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?.,.('' 00)/ $ *=-
SACREDBLUE-Italic
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?.,.('' 00)/ $ *=-
SACREDBLUE-Italic Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?.,.('' 00)/ $ *=-
SACREDBLUE-Bold
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!?.,.('' 00)/ $ *=-

Blue Line Pro's Vol. 2 of inexpensive lettering font

BLDIGITALCARTOON and **BLSACREDBLUE** fonts are formatted for Macintosh and PC Compatibles in a TruType format. Also included is user configurable word balloons in .eps format.

Blue Line Pro Comic Book Fonts Vol.2
- **ITEM#** BL2002 - **SRP $19.95**

SKETCH BOOK SERIES

Blue Line offers two different sizes of Sketch Books. A Regular 81/2" x 11" size and the Traditional 11" x 17" size both are filled with 200 pages of 70 lb. art paper. Both have hard covers with library quality stitch binding for durability and makes it easier to draw without an art table.

SKETCH BOOK REGULAR (8 1/2" x 11")

This standard sized hard covered book offers anyone with the ability to pick up a pencil the opportunity to draw. An artist could create their own library of sketches. Great for when you don't want to carry a sketch board around or your just sitting around with your friends. Also a good way to collect artist signatures and sketches at conventions!
- **Item #BL1010** / 200 pg. Hard cover book. **SRP $24.95**

SKETCH BOOK TRADITIONAL (11" x 17")

This Sketch Book offers the artist the ability to draw the size they're going to draw their original comic book pages.
- **Item #BL1011** / 200 pg. Hard cover book. **SRP $27.95**

BACK IN STOCK!!

BLUE LINE PRO'S "HOW TO" BOOK SERIES

BLUE LINE PRO'S

DIGITAL COLORS for COMICS

Scanning
Clean-up
Color Roughs
Flat Colors

Step by Steps
Palettes
Rendering
Layers
Channels
and More!

BLUE LINE PRO'S DIGITAL COLORS FOR COMICS

By Aaron Hübrich

Blue Line Pro presents the first in a series of Blue Line Pro "how to" manual books with everything you would ever need to know about digital coloring, and then some. With 48 square-bound full color pages, digital colorist and *Sketch* columnist Aaron Hübrich walks us though the process of digitally coloring from start to finish, providing extensive commentaries and broken down step by step. In addition, Aaron shows that there is more then one way to color a cat by demonstrating alternative pathways for the same effects.
Full Color 8x10 48pg.
SRP $9.95
ITEM# BL3001

BLUE LINE PRO'S DIGITAL COLORS FOR COMICS CD-ROM EDITION

This special edition includes several **extra** features on one easy to use CD. Includes ready-to-color high resolution line art that corresponds with the lessons taught in the book, exclusive links to the internet for addition information and updates, and much, much more. CD comes sealed on inside back cover. Compatible with PC and Mac.
Full Color 8x10 48pg. with CD
SRP $15.95
ITEM# BL3001CD

CREATE YOUR OWN COMIC BOOK!

Blue Line has developed a simple and inexpensive step by step to create your very first comic book, that's fun, easy and comprehensive. A box set of Blue Line products that aid a person in making their own comic! It includes 1 Character Template, 6 Concept Sketch Pages, 6 Comic Book Layout Pages, 24 Comic Book Pages, 1 Comic Book Cover Sheet and a 24 page instructional comic book.

- **ITEM#** BL1002   **SRP $21.95**
Box Set. 37 art pages / 24 page b&w instructional comic book / full color die cut box / shrink wrapped.

INDIA INK

• Higgens Black India Ink
A non-clogging ink for lettering pens and brushes. Opaque semi-gloss black finish and waterproof.
- AR-4415 Black Ink (Higgins) 1oz $3.00
- AR-EF44011 Black Magic Ink (Higgins) 1oz $3.50
Higgins Waterproof Black Magic Ink is non-corrosive, free-flowing, and non-clogging. Great for use on tracing vellum and other film surfaces

• Pelikan Drawing Ink
One of the finest drawing ink available. Pelikan ink is great with technical pens, graphic and fine art papers or tracing cloth.
- AR-PE211862 Black India Ink (Pelikan) 1oz.$4.75
- AR-PE211169 Black India Ink (Pelikan) 8oz $18.75

• Pelikan "T" Ink
Permanent and completely waterproof Good with matte-surfaces or waterproof tracing cloth.
- AR-PE221374 Black Ink Pelikan "T" 1oz $6.00

• KOH-I-NOOR RAPIDOGRAPH INK
Rapidograph Ink, Black, opaque ink for drafting film, paper, and tracing cloth. For use with Koh-I-Noor Rapidograph Pens.
- AR-3084-FI Koh-I-Noor Ink $3.95

• WHITE OUT
FW Acrylic Artist Waterproof White Ink Great for use with technical pens, brushes, and dip pens.
- A-R-FW-011 FW White Acrylic Artist Ink $ 5.00

BRUSHES

• Winsor/Newton Series 7
Made with Kolinsky sable with traditional black handle. Great brush.
- AR-5007001 Winsor/Newton Series7 Size#1 $18.95
- AR-5007002 Winsor/Newton Series7 Size#2 $22.95
- AR-5007003 Winsor/Newton Series7 Size#3 $36.75

Round Brushes
Made with natural Sable with excellent edges and points for precise strokes.
- AR-NB-38-0 Round Brush Size #0 $3.00
- AR-NB-38-1 Round Brush Size #1 $3.25
- AR-NB-38-2 Round Brush Size #2 $3.95
- AR-056009016 Round Brush Size#3 $3.95

PENCILS & QUILL PENS

• Non-Photo Blue Pencil
Makes marks not appear when artwork is reproduced. Very useful.
- AR-761-5 Non-photo Blue Pencil $.60

• Quill Inking Pen
Quill Pens offers super-fine flexible point Used by many professional inkers.
- AR-H9432 Quill Inking Pen #102 (Tip & Holder) $3.25
- AR-H9402 12 Crow Quill #102 Tips (Inking Pen Nibs only) $13.95

ERASERS

• Kneaded Eraser
Gray soft bendable eraser used for pencil and charcoal.
- AR-1224 Kneaded Rubber Eraser Large $1.15

• Eraser Pencils
Peel off wrap ideal for detail erasing
- AR-400 Eraser Pencils $1.15
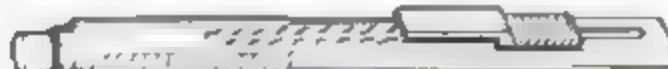
• Pentel Clic
Pen style holder, retract as needed
- AR-ZE-21C Pentel Clic Eraser/Holder $1.95
- AR-ZER-2 Pentel Refill Erasers $1.75

• Erasing Shield
Metal shield with different sizes and shapes.
- AR-FT-5370 Erasing Shield $1.10

PENCIL SHARPNER

Canister Sharpener offers metal blades with high impact plastic container
- AR-MR906 Canister Sharper $3.95

• ALVIN PENSTIX

Graphic waterproof drawing pen offering India ink density Black permanent drawing ink
- AR-4013-EEF 0.3mm $1.55
- AR-4017-F 0.7mm $1.55
- AR-4015-EF 0.5mm $1.55

• Penstix Set
Includes all 3 Penstix Sizes
- AR-4033 3mm, 7mm, 5mm $4.45

• Penstix Drawing/Sketching Markers
Offers maximum India drawing ink like density. Black waterproof permanent ink.
- AR-3013-EEF 0.3mm ExEx Fine $1.55
- AR-3015-EF 0.5mm Ex Fine $1.55
- AR-3017-F 0.7mm Fine $1.55

• Pentrix Drawing/Sketching Marker Set
Set of all 3 sizes.
- AR-3033 Set of 3 3, 5, 7mm $4.45

• SAKURA PIGMA BRUSH

Archival performance with flexible brush style nib. Very fine lines or broad strokes. Water/chem proof + fade resistant.
- AR-XSDK-BR-49 Black $3.00

ALVIN DRAWING PEN/MARKERS

• Tech-Liner Super Point Drawing Pen/ Markers
Permanent waterproof ink that dries instantly. Nibs set in stainless steel sleeves for protection
- AR-TL01 0.1mm $1.95
- AR-TL02 0.2mm $1.95
- AR-TL03 0.3mm $1.95
- AR-TL04 0.4mm $1.95
- AR-TL05 0.5mm $1.95

Tech-Liner Super Point Drawing Pen/ Markers Sets
- AR-TLP5 set of 5 (all sizes above) $9.50
- AR-TLP3 set of 3 (1, 3,.5mm) $5.75

KOH-I-NOOR RAPIDOGRAPH PENS

Rapidograph Pens are made of impact and chemical-resistant components for drawing and specialty inks. Good balance and self-polishing stainless steel points
- AR-3165-06/0 Tech Pen Size 6x0 (13mm) $27.00
- AR-3165-04/0 Tech Pen Size 4x0 (18mm) $27.00
- AR-3165-03/0 Tech Pen Size 3x0 (25mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-02/0 Tech Pen Size 2x0 (3mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-01/0 Tech Pen Size #0 (35mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-01 Tech Pen Size #1 (5mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-02 Tech Pen Size #2 (6mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-03 Tech Pen Size #3 (8mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-04 Tech Pen Size #4 (1mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-06 Tech Pen Size #6 (1.4mm) $22.00
- AR-3165-07 Tech Pen Size #7 (2mm) $22.00

MECHANICAL PENCIL

Berol Mechanical Pencil is precision made w/button lead release and light aluminum barrel.
• Mechanical Pencil 2mm.
- AR-BP10C $6.95
• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. HB
- AR-BP2375-HB $10.50
• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. 2H
- AR-BP2375-2H $10.50
• 12-Pencil Leads- 2mm. 2B
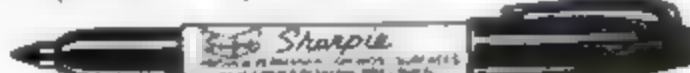- AR-SA02263-2B $10.50
• 12-Non-Photo Blue Leads-2mm.
- AR-BP2376-NPB $10.50

• Mechanical Pencil Sharpener
Provides professional point for standard leads
- AR-BP14C Pencil Shapener (Mech. Pencil) $10.75

• SHARPIE MARKERS

Permanent markers with high intensity ink. Quick drying
- AR-SA37101 Ultra Fine Black $1.30
- AR-SA35101 Extra Fine Black $1.30
- AR-SA30101 Regular Black $1.30
- AR-SA33101 Super Sharpie $1.95

• METALLIC PENS

Offers high quality metallic ink. Great for autographs.
- AR-SA46115 Gold Pen $4.50
- AR-SA46120 Silver Pen $4.50

• CHINA MARKING PENCILS

Offers moisture resistant, non-toxic odor-free pigments. Self Sharpening. Offered as a dozen or singles.
AR-173T Dozen Black $10.75
AR-173T-1 Single Black $.95
AR-164T Dozen White $10.75
AR-164T-1 Single White $.95

• Sakura Pigma Micron

Available in six point sizes. Waterproof, chemical proof and fade resistant and will not smear or feather when dry
- AR-XSK005-49 20mm, black $2.95
- AR-XSK01-49 25mm, black $2.95
- AR-XSK02-49 30mm, black $2.95
- AR-XSK03-49 35mm, black $2.95
- AR-XSK05-49 45mm, black $2.95
- AR-XSK08-49 50mm black $2.95
- AR-30061 3-pk., .25, .35, .45mm $8.00
- AR-30062 All sizes, black $16.00

• Sandpaper Pointer

Ideal for pointing pencils, leads, charcoal and crayons by hand
- AR-3435-1 Sandpaper Pointer $.95

• Magic-Rub Eraser

Eraser especially developed for sensitive surfaces, will not mark of smudge
- AR-1954FC-1 Magic-Rub Eraser $.95

• Blending Stumps

Soft paper felt with double pointed ends used for blending charcoal, pastels, etc. Use sandpaper to repoint
- AR-T811-1 ¼" x 5 ¼" $.50
- AR-T812-1 5/16" x 6" $.75
- AR-T813-1 13/32" x 6" $1.00
- AR-T814-1 15/32" x 6" $1.25
- AR-T817-1 5/8" x 6" $1.50

• WORKABLE FIXATIF (Krylon)

Provides lasting protection. Prevents smudging, dusting and wrinkling.
Workable Fixatif
- AR-KR1306 $8.95

• Palette Tray

7" by 5" plastic tray works excellent for holding inks
AR-CW161 SRP $1.95

T-SQUARES

• **Plastic T-squares** offering flexible plastic with both metric and standard measurements
- **AR-HX02** Plastic 12" $3.95
- **AR-NBA18** Plastic 18" $7.95
- **AR-NBA24** Plastic 24" $10.95

• **Aluminum T-squares** offering hard tempered aluminum blade riveted to a rugged plastic head
- **AR-FR63-112** Aluminum 12" $10.95
- **AR-FR63-118** Aluminum 18" $12.95
- **AR-FR63-124** Aluminum 24" $13.95

TRIANGLES

High quality triangles made of .080" acrylic. Raised inking edges. Great for Inkers.

• **30" x 60"W/ Inking Edge**
- **AR-1204-60** Triangle 30"x60" 4 inch $3.50
- **AR-1206-60** Triangle 30"x60" 6 inch $4.50
- **AR-1208-60** Triangle 30"x60" 8 inch $5.50
- **AR-1210-60** Triangle 30"x60" 10 inch $6.50
- **AR-1212-60** Triangle 30"x60" 12 inch $8.50
- **AR-1214-60** Triangle 30"x60" 14 inch $10.50

• **45" X 90"W/ Inking Edge**
- **AR-1204-45** Triangle 45"x90" 4 inch $4.50
- **AR-1206-45** Triangle 45"x90" 6 inch $5.50
- **AR-1208-45** Triangle 45"x90" 8 inch $7.50
- **AR-1210-45** Triangle 45"x90" 10 inch $9.50
- **AR-1212-45** Triangle 45"x90" 12 inch $13.50

COMPASS SET

Geometry set includes ruler, compass, two triangles, protractor, eraser, and sharpener

• **8-piece Geometry Set**
- **AR-HX18807** $4.95
• **8-Piece Geometry Set** (brass compass)
- **AR-723405** $7.95
• **Basic Geometry Set**
4-piece Geometry Set (Ruler, 12" protractor, 30/60 + 45/90 triangles)
- **AR-FL03** $5.95

HELIX DRAWING SET

• **Basic Combination Compass**
6-piece compass set: side-screw bow compass, knee joint compass, extension bar, spare leads, 2" divider point and a lead pointer
- **AR-S61** Set $15.95

• **Compass Set**
6-piece drawing set contains: Small side screw compass, 5 ½" self-centering knee joint compass/divider, extension bar, technical pen adapter, divider point and lead pointer
- **ARHLX01330-01330** Set $16.95
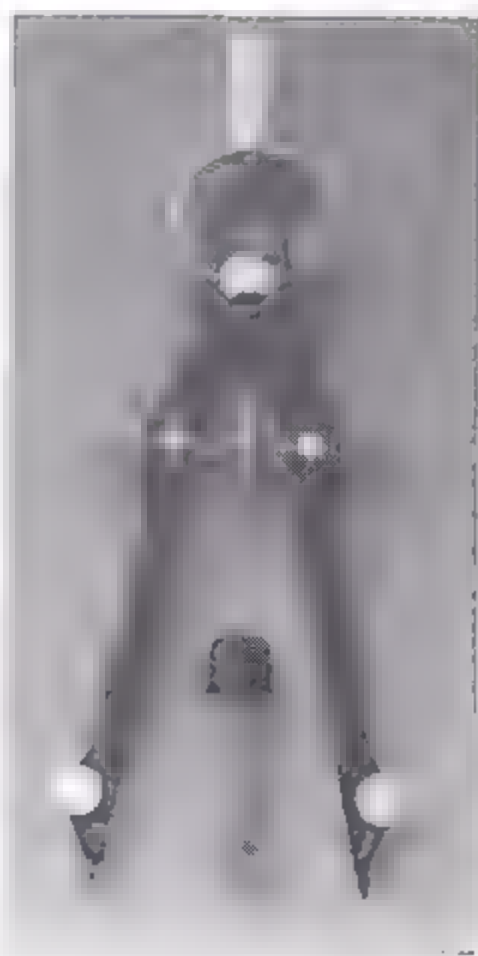
• **5" Bow Compass & Divider**
An all metal construction compass with replaceable needle and lead. Makes accurate 8" diameter circles. Extra pivot point for use as a divider
- **AR-494** 5" Bow Compass $4.95

• **14 Piece Drafting Kit**
Drafting Kit includes 12" architectural scale, 12x16 vinyl pouch, lettering guide pad, 6" compass, 6" divider, 10" 30/60 triangle, 8" 45/90 triangle, 6" protractor, 6 ¾ french curve, soft pencil eraser, lead holder, mini lead pointer, erasing shield and a three pack of 2.0mm lead
- **AR-BDK-1A** 15 Piece Drafting Kit $38.95

RULERS

• **Stainless Steel Rulers** offering flexible steel with non-skid cork backing
- **AR-200-12** Steel Ruler 12 inch Cork Backing $5.95
- **AR-200-18** Steel Ruler 18 inch Cork Backing $6.95

• **Plastic Ruler** 1 inch with 1/16" markings and metric markings.
- **AR-C36** Ruler 12" (plastic ruler) $1.25
- **AR-18** Ruler 6" (plastic ruler) $.50
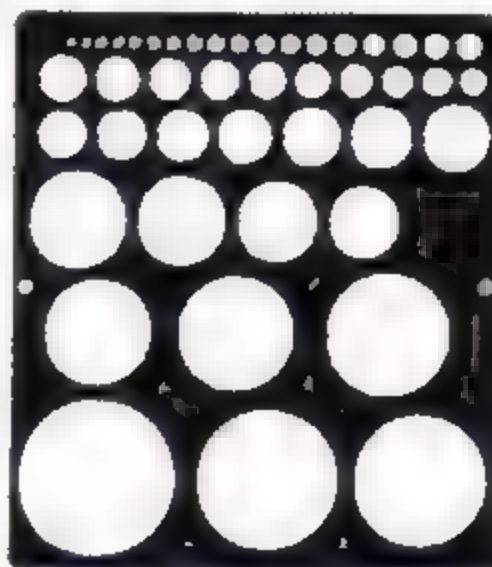
CIRCLE TEMPLATES / FRENCH CURVES / ELLIPSE TEMPLATES

• **Circle Templates**
Metric and standard. Risers for smear-free drawing. (Great for Inkers)
• **Large Circles**
- **AR-13001** $7.95
• **Extra Large Circles**
- **AR-13011** $6.95

• **French Curves** (Inking Edge)
- **AR-9000** Set $6.95
• **Ellipse Temps.**
- **AR-PK12691** $12.00
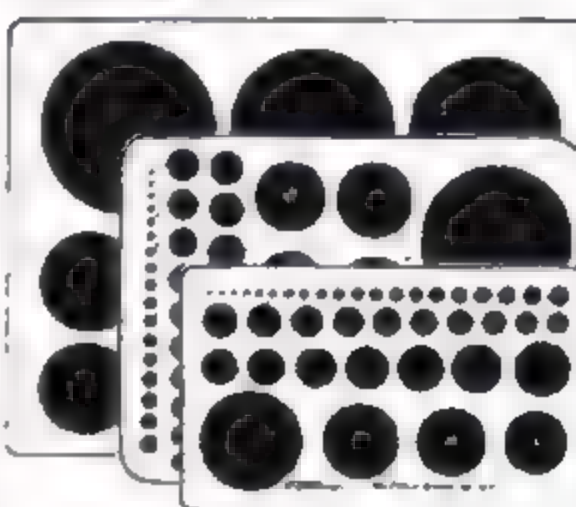
• **Circle Templates Set of 3**
This set of 3 templates provides ninety-eight different circles and edge scales in 50th 16th and 10th as well as mm and centering lines. Sizes ranging from 1/32 inches to 3 ½ inches.
- **ITEM #AR-TD404** SRP $17.95

• **Ellipse Template**
- **AR-PK12691** $12.00

• **POCKET PORTFOLIO**
- **AR-FL419WH** Pocket Portfolio 14 x 20 $10.50

COMIC BOOK ORIGINAL ART SLEEVES

Protect your original Art Work
• **Comic Book Original Art Sleeves**
11 ½" x 19" Polyethylene (3.0 mil)
- **AR-BAG 1119-25** 25 Bags $7.50
- **AR-BAG 1119-100** 100 Bag $25.00
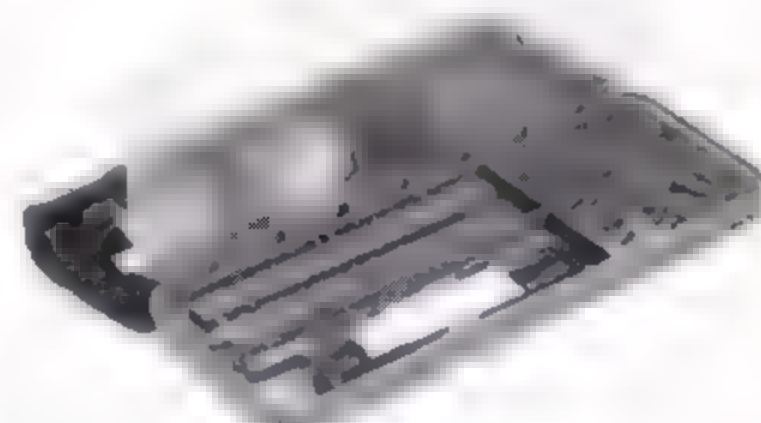
STORAGE BOXES

• **Sketch Pac** 2-sided safe storing box 12 3/8" x 4 ¼" x 1 ¾"
- **AR-6880AB** $12.95

• **One Tray Art Bins** 13" x 7 ¼" x5 ¾", Elevated tray for viewing of supplies in bottom bin. Tight Latch
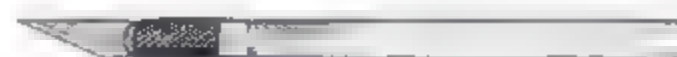- **AR-6843AC** black $15.25

• **DRAFTSMAN BRUSH**
Removes shavings from paper. Cleaning without fear of smudging.
• **Draftsman Brush** (cleaning paper)
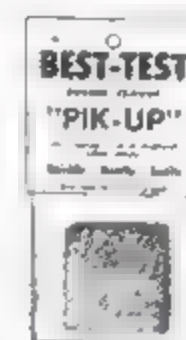- **AR-FT5391** $6.00

XACTO KNIFE

Rubberized barrel. Rear-release mechanism with safety cap.
• **Xacto Knife**
- **AR-XA3626** $5.25
Xacto Refill Blades #1
- **AR-OLKB** $6.50

BEST-TEST PAPER CEMENT

BEST-TEST "PIK-UP"

RUBBER CEMENT

Contact adhesive for paste-up and other graphic art uses
• **Rubber Cement 4oz.**
- **AR-BT138** $3.50
• **Rubber Cement Quart**
- **AR-BT102** $13.25
• **Rubber Cement Thinner Pint**
- **AR-BT201** $8.50
• **Rubber Cement Pick-Up** (eraser)
- **AR-BT700** $1.50

• 12" Unisex Wooden Mannequin
Human Adult figure mannequin with perfect proportions, adjustable joints for posing. Great for modeling proportions involving angles. Made from carved hardwood, 12" in height.
-AR-CW201 12" Model
SRP $19.95

Wooden Mannequins
Great for modeling proportions and poses at any angle. Made from carved hardwood.
- AR-CLY9037 6" Male   SRP $12.95
- AR-CLY9036 6" Female   SRP $12.95
- AR-CLY9020 12" Male   SRP $19.95
- AR-CLY9019 12" Female   SRP $19.95
- AR-CLY9042 20" Male   SRP $29.95
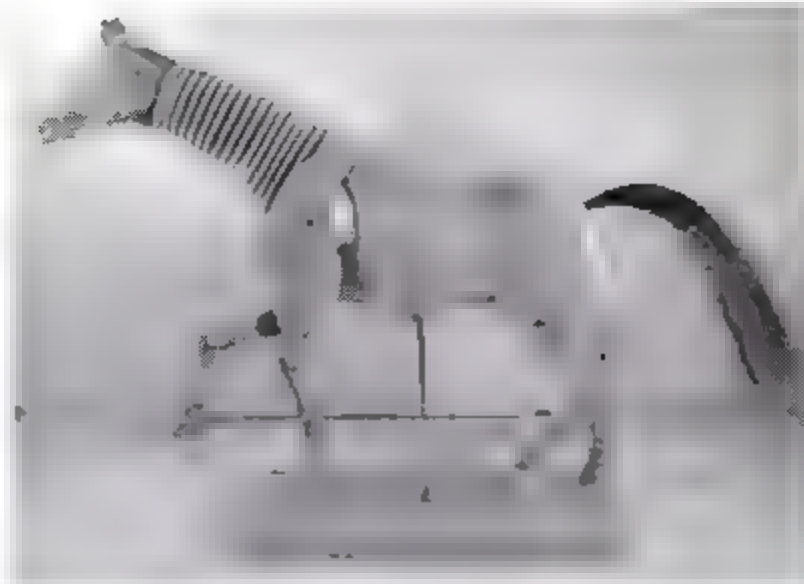
• 12" Horse Wooden Manikan
- AR033090410   SRP $99.00
• 12" Lizard Wooden Mannequin
- AR056090440   SRP $17.99

• Hand Mannequins
Life-like hardwood hand mannequins are fully articulated. Comes in three sizes male, female and child
-AR-HM3 14" Male Hand   SRP $49.95
-AR-HM4 12" Female Hand   SRP $46.95
-AR-HM5 9" Child Hand   SRP $42.95
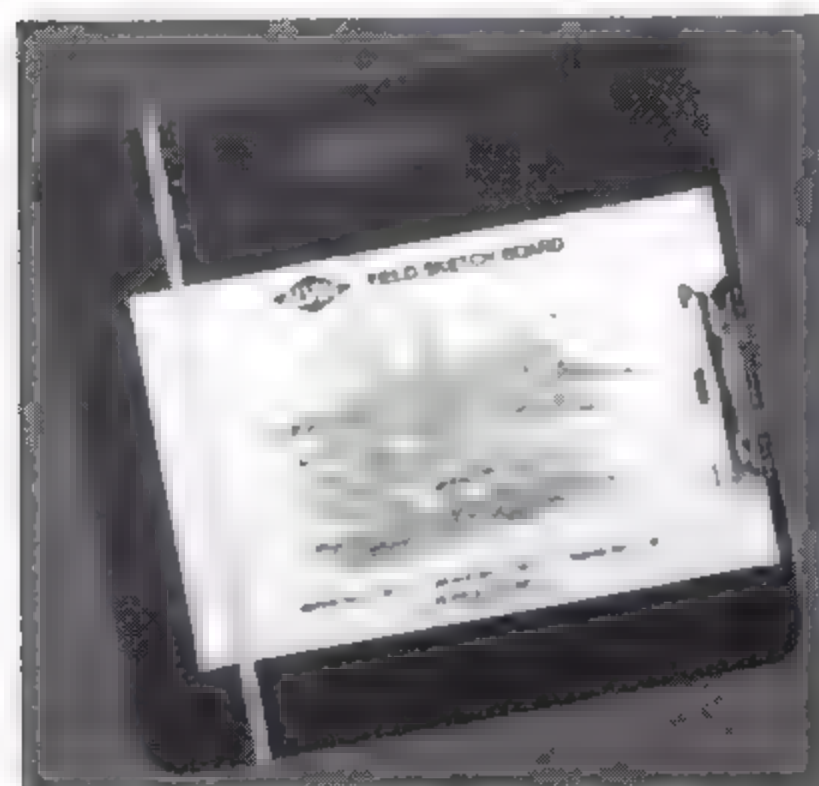
• LIGHTWEIGHT SKETCH BOARDS
Made of strong, tempered masonite with cutout carry handle. Metal clips and rubber band (included) hold paper securely in place
-AR-SB1819 18 ½" X 19 ½"   SRP $9.95
-AR-SB2326 23 ½" X 26"   SRP $12.95
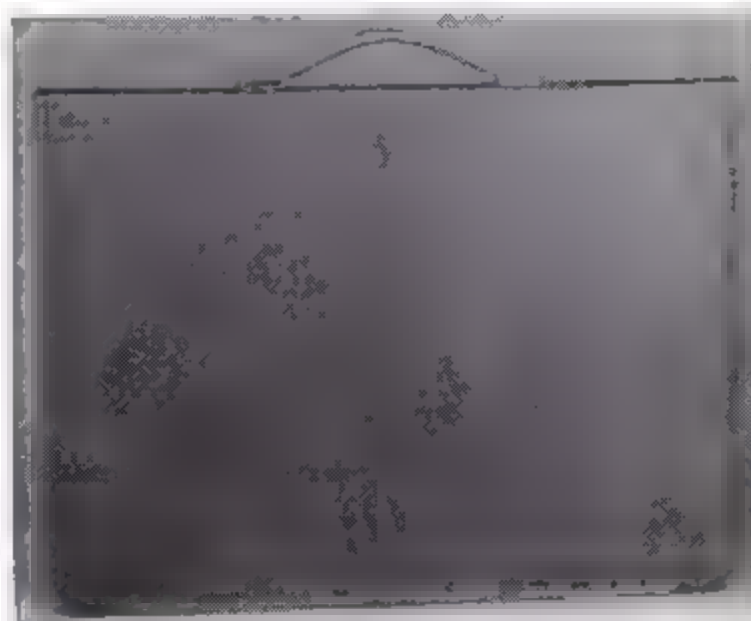
• PRESENTATION CASES (PORTFOLIO)
Spine mounted handle allows pages to hang properly to avoid wrinkling. Features 1" black superior quality rings (Does not snag pages). Includes 10 archival pages (#ZX).
-AR-S1-2171 17" x 14"   SRP $68.95
-AR-S1-2241 24" x 18"   SRP $110.50
Refill Pages for Presentation Case
-AR-ZX17 17" x 14" 10 pack   SRP $23.95
-AR-ZX24 24" x 18" 10 pack   SRP $45.95
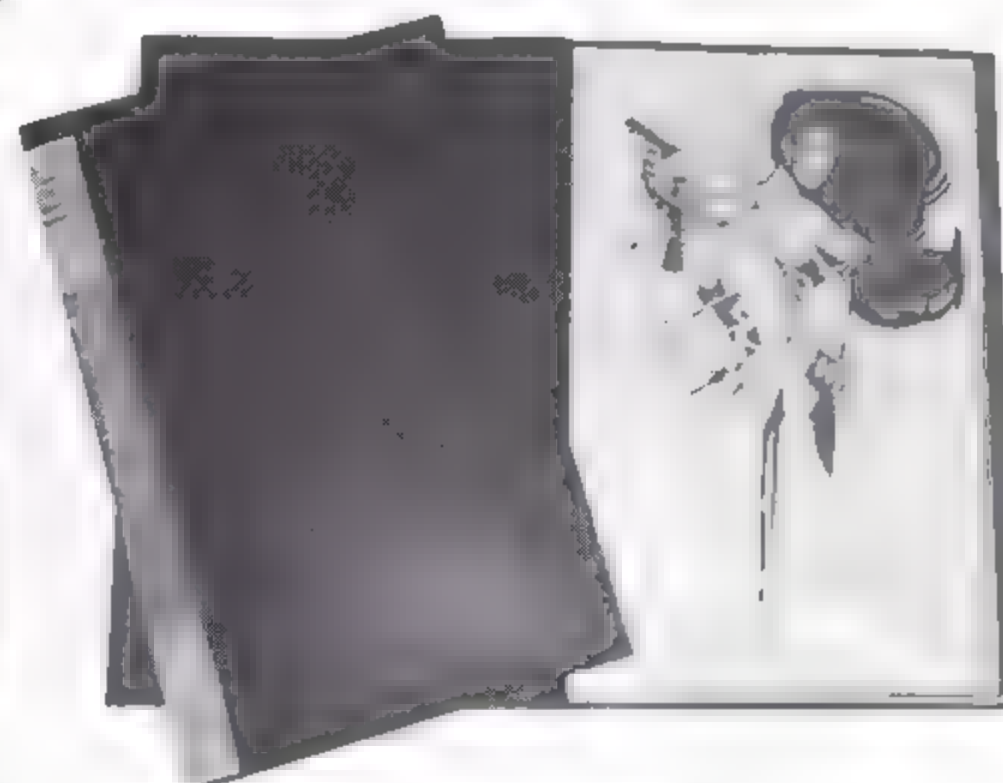
• DISPLAY PORTFOLIOS ARTFOLIOS
24 pages of acid, pvc, and legnen safe art sleeves Archival Safe
- AR-IA1212 Artfolio Book 11 x 17 w/ 24 shts *SRP* $15.95
(Holds Blue Line Comic Book Art Boards)
- AR-IA 1214 Artfolio book 14 x 17 w/ 24 shts *SRP* $25.95
(Holds most oversized art boards)
- AR-IA 128 Artfolio book 8 1/2 x 11 w/ 24 shts *SRP* $7.50

ELECTRIC ERASER and REFILLS

• ALVIN ELECTRIC ERASER
Durable, high-quality UL-listed unit. Uses of a full 7" eraser eliminates the annoyance of stopping constantly during heavy workload periods to insert short erasers. Unbreakable LEXAN casing fits the hand comfortably and can be hung by a convenient ring. The heavy duty AC motor eliminates the continual repair problems of typical lightweight erasers. Motor cooling vent locations are designed to allow cool operation even under heaviest workloads.
-AR-EE1754 With slip-chuck   SRP $85.00

• KOH-I-NOOR ELECTRIC ERASER
• ALL PURPOSE ELECTRIC SYSTEM
Designed to erase both lead and ink from paper and film. Features a heavy-duty, maintenance free 115v motor, protected by a high-impact white LEXAN case. Maximum efficiency with either the No. 287 white vinyl strip eraser for paper or the specially formulated no. 285 imbibed yellow strip eraser for film. Includes a No. 287 strip eraser
-AR-2800E All purpose Electric System   SRP $73.95

• ERASER REFILLS
-AR-ER72 7" dark grey, ink, 1 doz   SRP $6.95
-AR-ER73 7" white, pencil, 1 doz.   SRP $6.95
-AR-ER74 7" pink, pencil, 1 doz.   SRP $6.95
-AR-ER88 7" white vinyl, ink/pencil, 1 doz SRP $6.95

• CORDLESS/RECHARGEABLE ERASER
Contains a trouble-free motor that delivers up to 4,500 rpm, fully charged. Versatile, two-way operation —cordless or AC. Long lasting rechargeable battery, break resistant LEXAN case. Lightweight, portable recharging stand power pack, plus a No. 287 vinyl strip eraser
-AR-2850C Cordless, Rechargeable   SRP $96.95
• KOH-I-NOOR ERASER REFILLS
-AR-ER285 Yellow, Imbibed, ink 10/box   SRP $6.95
-AR-ER287 Soft Vinyl, pencil, 10/box   SRP $5.95

PRISMACOLOR MARKERS AND SETS

- All Colors are available!
- All Singles $3.30
- Metallic: single nib

PRISMACOLOR SETS
- Primary/Secondary 12-Set
Includes AR-PM 50, 19, 15, 57, 6, 4, 32, 44, 53, 31, 61, and 9
-AR-BP12N $40 00
- Cool Grey 12-set
-AR-BP12P $40 00
- Warm Grey 12-set
-AR-BP12Q $40 00
- French Grey 12-set
-AR-BP12R $40 00
- Prismacolor 24 set
-AR-BP24S $79 25
- Prismacolor 48 set
-AR-BP48S $158 50
- Prismacolor 72 set
-AR-BP72S $238 00
- Prismacolor 120 set
-AR-BP120S $394 00
- Prismacolor 144 set
-AR-BP144S $470 00
- Empty Studio Marker Stacker
-AR-STUDIO $18 00
- Prismacolor 24 set w/hard carrying case
-AR-BP24C $90.00
- Prismacolor 48 set w/hard carrying case
-AR-BP48C $170 00

- All Single Colors are available!
Available on line at
www bluelinepro.com or
call 859-282-0096.

You must purchase a minimum of 12
single marker each time you order.

- **Prismacolor Singles**
Unique four in one design creates four line widths from one double-ended marker. Extra broad nibs imitates paint brush stroke while fine and thin nibs achieve gentle refined strokes

- **Prismacolor Art Pencil Sets**
Professional Art Pencil Sets Soft lead, permanent pigments, blendable. Water and smear resistant No eraser

- 12 Color Pencil Set -ARSAN03596	$13.95
- 24 Color Pencil Set -ARSAN03597	$26.95
- 48 Color Pencil Set -ARSAN03598	$51.95
- 72 Color Pencil Set -ARSAN03599	$76.95
- 96 Color Pencil Set -ARSAN03601	$101.95
- 120 Color Pencil Set -ARSAN03602	$127 95

Dr. MARTIN WATERCOLORS

- Radiant Concentrated Watercolors Dr Martin's
Extremely concentrated watercolors. Giving great brilliance and radiant tones in illustrations They may be diluted with water and blend freely. Radiant colors are less transparent than synchromatic colors In 5 oz dropper top bottles.
SRP $3.95 each
All Single Colors Available on-line at www.bluelinepro.com or call 859-282-0096.

-Radiant Concentrated Sets Dr. Martin
Each set is comprised of 14 colors to cover the entire range of radiant colors.
5 oz bottles.
- **#ARDRA** "A" set includes · Alpine Rose, Black, Cherry Red, Grass Green, Juniper Green, Lemon Yellow, Moss Rose, Orange, Persimmon, Saddle Brown, Scarlet, True Blue, Turquoise Blue, Violet.
SRP $55 20 per set.
- **#ARDRB** "B" set includes: Amber Yellow Apple Green, Crimson, Cyclamen, Daffodil Yellow, Golden Brown, Mahogany, Moss Green, Olive Green, Sepia, Slate Blue, Tangerine, Ultra Blue, Wild Rose
SRP $55.20
- **#ARDRC** "C" set includes: Antelope Brown, Burnt Orange, Calypso Green, Charteuse, Hyacinth Blue, Ice Pink, Ice Yellow, Jungle Green, Norway Blue, Pumpkin, Tapestry, Tobacco Brown, Tropic Gold, Tropic Pink.
SRP $55 20
- **#ARDRD** "D" set includes Coffee Brown, Fuchsia, Ice Blue, Ice Green, Indian Yellow, Irish Blue, Peacock Blue, Raspberry, Sunrise Pink, Sunset Orange, Sunset Red, Sunshine Yellow, Tahiti Red, Tiger Yellow.
SRP $55.20

- Synchromatic Transparent Watercolors Dr. Martin
Synchromatic colors are easy to handle and give ultimate transparency They may be diluted with water 5 oz.
Dropper top bottles
SRP $3.95
All Single Colors Available on-line at www.bluelinepro.com or call 859-282-0096

- **Synchromatic Transparent Art Set**
#ARDRCS Thirty-six 5 oz bottles. Includes: Beige, Black, Burnt Sienna, Cadmium, Cadmium Orange, Carmine, Cense, Chromium Yellow, Cobalt Blue, Dark Gray, Emerald, Hooker's Green, Lake, Lemon Yellow, Light Brown, Light Gray, Magenta, Medium Gray, Nile Green, Olive Green, Orange, Payne's Gray, Prussian Blue, Purple, Red Brown, Rose Carmine, Scarlet, Sepia, Turquoise Blue, Ultramarine, Van Dyke Brown, Vermillion, Violet, Viridian, Yellow Ochre
SRP $113 50
- Synchromatic Transparent Art Small Set

NEW

Satin-Glow Lightboxes
Great for transferring drawings onto art boards
- AR-LB1218	12" x 18"	$205.00
- AR-LB1620	16" x 20"	$325.00
- AR-LB1824	18" x 24"	$485.00

Brush Box
This 12" by 4" by 1 ½" sturdy wooden box protects your valuable brushes and pens
AR-YK23000 SRP $$7 95

Blonfang
TRACING
PAPER A CALQUER PAPEL DE CALCAR
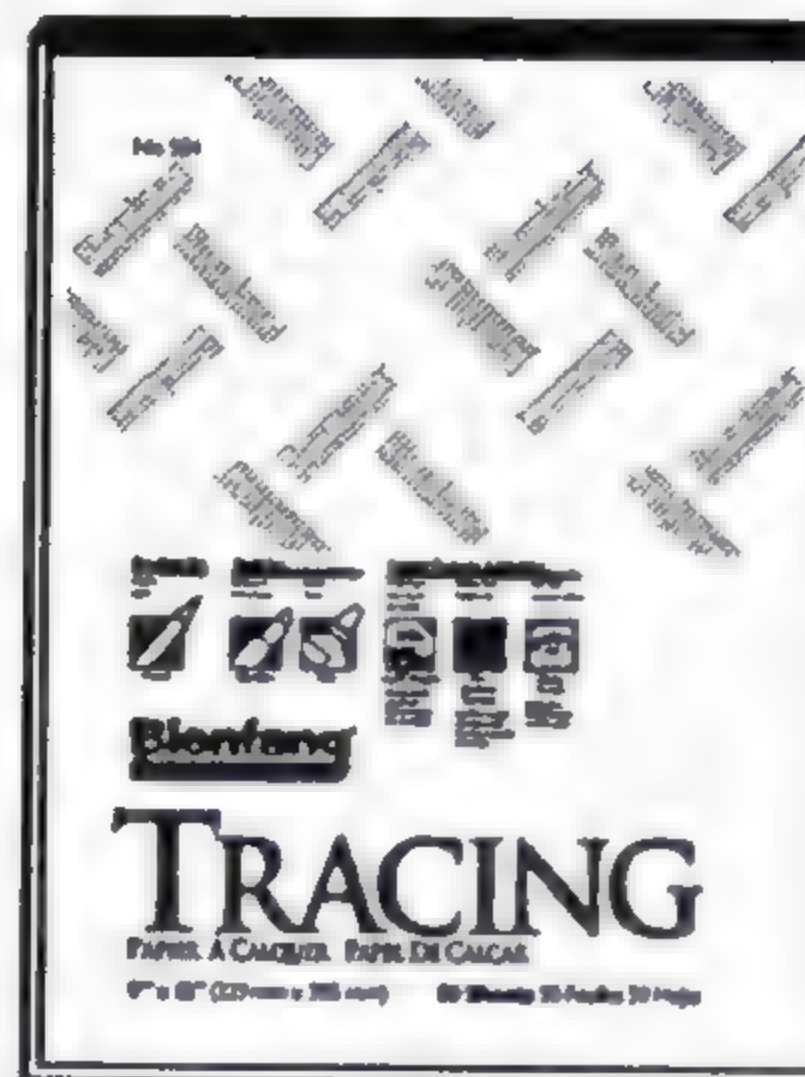
- **Tracing Paper**
The 504 Tracing Paper has excellent transparency and tooth It is used for rough sketches and overlays Fine surface is ideal for pencil, markers and inks.
- AR-HUN-243-123 (9"x12")	50 Sheets	$4.95
- AR-HUN-243-131 (11"x14")	50 Sheets	$6.95
- AR-HUN-243-143 (14"x17")	50 Sheets	$9.95
- AR-HUN0243-163 (19"x24")	50 Sheets	$17.95

COPIC MARKERS, AIR MARKERS, TONES, REFILLS

COPIC Markers have been widely used in Europe and Asia where their coloring qualities go hand in hand with the style we know as manga. Their versatility and variety lends itself to the imagination of the creator and gives him or her options for their creative style. The standard square designed COPIC marker is double-ended and fast drying. COPICs have been specially formulated with a toner designed not to dissolve making them able to work directly onto photocopied surfaces and provide clear unblemished color. One of the best parts about COPIC markers is their refillable ink and replaceable nib features.

• SINGLE BASIC MARKERS - $4.95 each

All Single Colors Available on-line at www.bluelinepro.com or call 859-282-0096

• COPIC MARKER SETS

AR-COP110 COPIC 12 Basic	$59.40
AR-COP112 COPIC 12 PCS NG	$59.40
AR-COP114 COPIC 12 PCS TG	$59.40
AR-COP116 COPIC 12 PCS WG	$59.40
AR-COP118 COPIC 12 PCS CG	$59.40
AR-COP120 COPIC 36 Color Set	$178.20
AR-COP140 Copic 72 Color Set A	$356.40
AR-COP150 Copic 72 Color Set B	$356.40
AR-COP155 Copic 72 Color Set C	$356.40
AR-COP160 Copic Empty Marker	$3.60
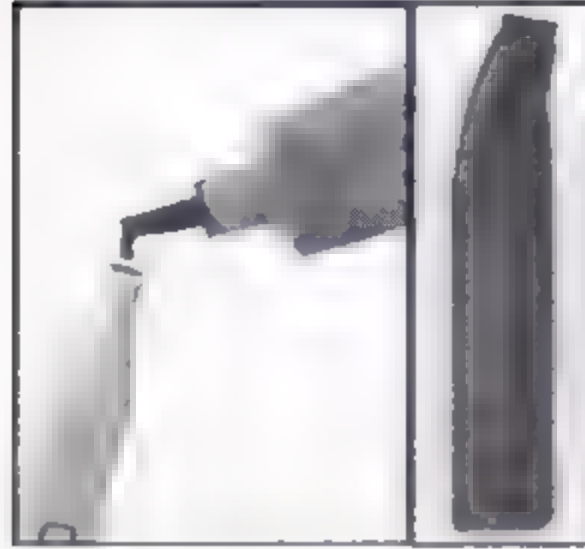
• COPIC Various Ink (Refills) $5.95

200 SERIES. One of the best parts about COPIC markers standard and sketch is their refillable ink feature. No more tossing out dried out markers. Just fill it back up again and you're ready to go. Refills can be used up six times. This refillable feature gives you the opportunity to make your own color though mixing inks, creating an original color all your own.

All Single Colors Available on-line at www.bluelinepro.com or call 859-282-0096

AR-COP210 Var Ink Colorless Blender $3.75
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Colorless Blender
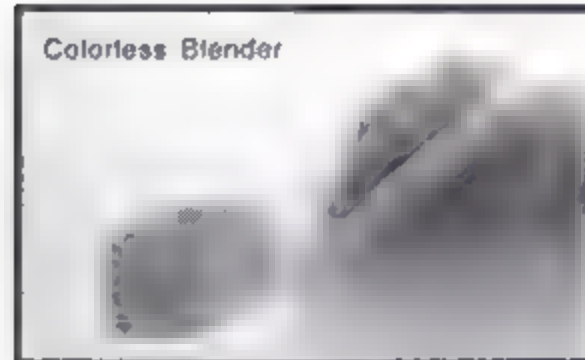
• Replacable Marker Nibs $4.20

Another great feature about COPIC makers is there interchangeable nibs. From broad to calligraphy - provide greater freedom of technique in your renderings. COPIC Nibs deliver clear vibrant color on photocopied surfaces as well as glass plastics and metals. The nibs are made of strong but flexible polyester for smooth consistent application. Nibs come in a pack of 10 except for the brush variety that comes in a pack of three

AR-COP300 Standard Broad	$4.20
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AR-COP385 Sketch Nib Super	$4.20
AR-COP90 Sketch Nib Med	$4.20

Nibs

• 400 Copic Tweezer $4.20

Our special COPIC Tweezers give you an easy no-mess nib change that gets you drawing again in minutes. Being able to change nibs quickly helps you keep up with the most demanding marker techniques.
AR-COP400 Tweezer $4.20

• SINGLE SKETCH MARKERS $4.95

The oval designed Sketch COPIC marker is double-ended and is fast drying. COPICs have been specially formulated with a toner designed not to dissolve making them able to work directly onto photocopied surfaces and provide clear unblemished color. COPIC Sketch markers' oval body profile gives you a feel of a fast flowing experience in your hands. It paints as well as it draws. They come with a broad nib and a brush like nib, available in medium + broad and super brush making them great for delicate or bold expression (from fashion and graphics to textiles and fine arts lettering/calligraphy) COPIC sketch markers are available in 286 colors. One of the best parts about COPIC markers is their refillable ink and replaceable nib features.

• Single COPIC SKETCH Markers $4.95

All Single Colors Available on-line at www.bluelinepro.com or call 859-282-0096

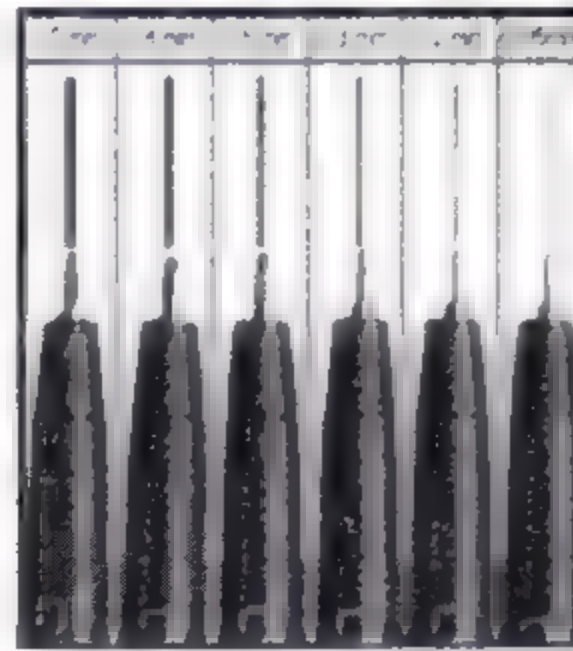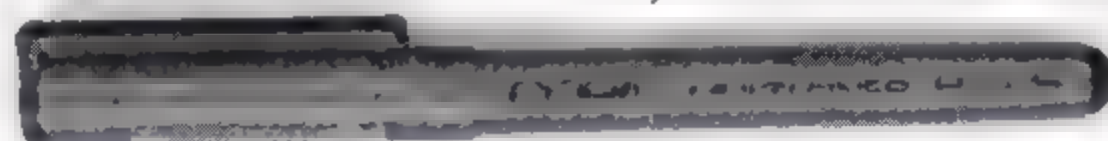|	
AR-COP450 Colorless Blender	$4.20
AR-COP45100 Black	$4.20
AR-COP45110 Special Black	$4.20
AR-COP452 Sketch 12 Basic Set	$59.40
AR-COP454 Sketch 36 Basic Set	$178.20
AR-COP456 Sketch 72 set A	$356.40
AR-COP458 Sketch 72 Set B	$356.40
AR-COP460 Sketch 72 Set C	$356.40
AR-COP462 Sketch 72 Set D	$356.40
AR-COP95 Empty sketch marker	$3.60

• COPIC PAPERS

AR-COP510 Copic Alcohol Marker Pad A4	$9.95
AR-COP520 Copic Alcohol Marker Pad B4	$19.95
AR-COP530 Manga Manuscript Paper A4	$6.95
AR-COP540 Manga Manuscript Paper B4	$9.95

• MARKER STORAGE

AR-COP550 72pc Wire Stand	$59.95
AR-COP560 36pc Block Stand	$29.95

• 500 Copic Opaque White $9.75

COPIC Opaque White is a water based white pigment used for highlight effects. It won't bleed into the base color so it gives sharp line definition and can be used on watercolor as well as other permanent ink surfaces.
AR-COP500 Opaque White $9.75

• COPIC's MULTI LINERS

drawing pens allow drawing without annoying running ink. They are available in pens and brush. The pens come in a wide range of line widths (from .05 to 1.0 mm) while the brushes come in three different sizes, small medium and large.

• MULTILINERS SINGLES

AR-COP600 Multiliner 05	$2.50
AR-COP610 Multiliner 0.1	$2.50
AR-COP620 Multiliner 0.3	$2.50
AR-COP630 Multiliner 0.5	$2.50
AR-COP640 Multiliner 0.8	$2.50
AR-COP650 Multiliner 1.0	$2.50
AR-COP660 Multiliner Brush M	$2.95
AR-COP670 Multiliner Brush S	$2.95
AR-COP671 Sepia ML 05	$2.50
AR-COP672 Sepia ML 1	$2.50
AR-COP673 Sepia ML 3	$2.50
AR-COP674 Grey ML 05	$2.50
AR-COP675 Grey ML 1	$2.50
AR-COP676 Grey ML 3	$2.50

• SETS

AR-COP680 Multiliner Set A	$15.00
AR-COP690 Multiliner Set B	$20.00

COPIC Air Marker

AIR MARKERS

• 705 ABS-1 Kit

ABS-1 Kit COPIC Markers can be used as an airbrush by inserting the broad top end of the pen into our uniquely designed adapter. The Airbrush feature is wonderful for creating backgrounds and filling in larger areas of space. The Airbrush tool creates little or no mess and allows for nearly instant change in color. It's simple to use - just attach one end of the COPIC Airbrush hose to a standard airbrush compressor and the other to the COPIC Airbrush adapter and you're ready to go. A compressed air can that attaches directly to the COPIC Airbrush adapter is available for portability. This is the airbrush ABS-1 Kit. It comes with 1. Air Grip (where the pen goes in) 2. The air adapter (where the empty canister that the air grip screws on to. This canister is just a reservoir, it does not contain air.) 3. The airhose (this connects from the bottom of the air adapter to the top of the aircan.) 4. The aircan 80 5. The air can holder (a foam square with 3 holes in it so that you can stand the different sizes of

arcans.) This kit has all of the components in it for someone who would like to have portability but have to option to connect it to a compressor.

AR-COP705 ABS-1 Kit $60.95

• 710 Starting Set ABS-2

Set ABS-2. COPIC Markers can be used as an airbrush by inserting the broad end of the pen into our uniquely designed adapter. The Airbrush feature is wonderful for creating backgrounds and filling in larger areas of space. The Airbrush tool creates little or no mess and allows for nearly instant change in color. It's simple to use - just attach one end of the COPIC Airbrush hose to a standard airbrush compressor and theother to the COPIC Airbrush adapter and you're ready to go. A compressed air can that attaches directly to the COPIC Airbrush adapter is available for portability. This is the portable version of our airbrush system. The ABS-2 Kit comes with a D-60 can of compressed air and the Airgrip. This item is great for the artist on the move. ONLY the D-60 aircan can be attached directly to the air grip because of some special tubing inside the can. The other sizes of aircans 80 and 180 have to be attached to the hose and then to the air adapter. They hold more air but are not so portable.

AR-COP710 Starting Set ABS-2	$26.50
AR-COP720 Starting Set ABS-3	$28.50
AR-COP730 Airgrip	$17.10
AR-COP740 Air Adapter	$11.40
AR-COP750 Airhose 1/4 to 1/8	$21.50
AR-COP755 Airhose 1/8 to 1/8	$21.50
AR-COP760 Air Can D-60	$8.95
AR-COP763 Air Can 80	$10.95
AR-COP765 Air Can 180	$12.95
AR-COP770 Air Compressor	$186.50

NX Kits

AR-COP910 NX Kit 2 $15.00
Starter kit to learn how to use color effects and techniques. Practice Sheets and a Color Guide are included.

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Copic Art Supplies!

DELETER   Manga Kits - Markers - Papers - Inks - Whiteout - Art Tools

For the serious How To Draw fan, the Deleter line of products is here for you. The Deleter line includes color overlays, screens, jr. screens, gradations, inking accessories, and the highly prized Neopiko line of alcohol based, double tipped markers. Give them a try today!
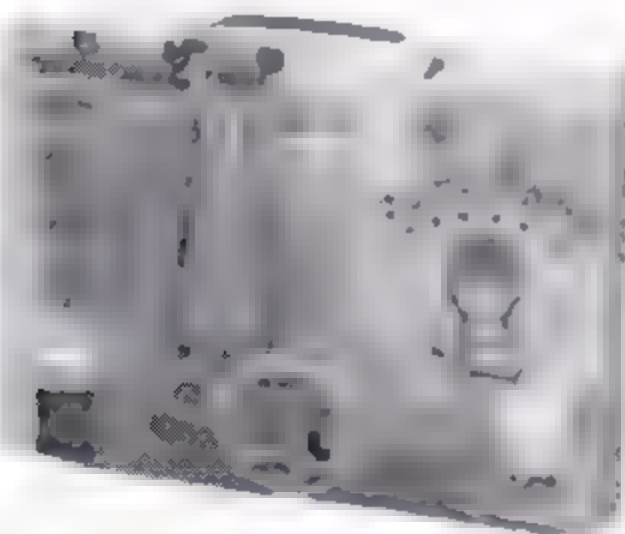
DELETER MANGA KITS

• Deluxe Manga Starter Kit
This great kit for getting into the world of manga includes 3 G-pen tips, 2 Maru-pen tips, pen holder, black ink and white ink, paintbrush, black Neo Piko marker, Comics-tones sampler set, 10 sheets of manga paper, "How to Draw Manga" book, 15cm tall posable doll (wood), and 2 sheets of lettering.
AR-DEL321-4033 $54.95

• Mini Manga Starter Kit
This great kit for getting into the world of manga includes 3 G-pen tips, 2 Maru-pen tips, pen holder, black ink and white ink, paintbrush, black Neo Piko marker, Comics-tones sampler set, 10 sheets of manga paper, and "How to Draw Manga" book
AR-DEL321-4032 $49.95

• Comic Club Neopiko Kit
This kit is a great introduction to Neopiko markers and coloring manga. This kit includes 1 Neopiko 12 color marker set, 5 sheets of manga paper (kent paper), 1 comic ink / white, 1 ink brush, 1 Neopiko Line 0.1mm tech pen, 1 color positioning pamphlet, and 3 neopiko practice sheet (w/ line drawings)
AR-DEL321-4036 $54.95

• Comic Club Tone Kit
This kit provides all the essentials to begin to use gray tones in manga illustrations. The kit includes 10 sheets of Manga Paper (A4 - 135 kg), 10 sheets of Junior Screens, 1 Comic Ink / Black, 1 Comic Ink / White, 1 tone burnisher (Hera), 1 free pen holder, 2 Maru Pen nibs, 3 - G-Pen nibs, 1 instructional pamphlet (Japanese), 3 sets of tone practice sheets (w/ line drawings), and 1 cutter
AR-DEL321-4037 $49.95

Deleter Inking Accessories
• Pen (Nib) Holder
You can use this for all Maru-pens, G-pens, Aaji-pens (Tama-pen).
AR-DEL3411003 $3.95
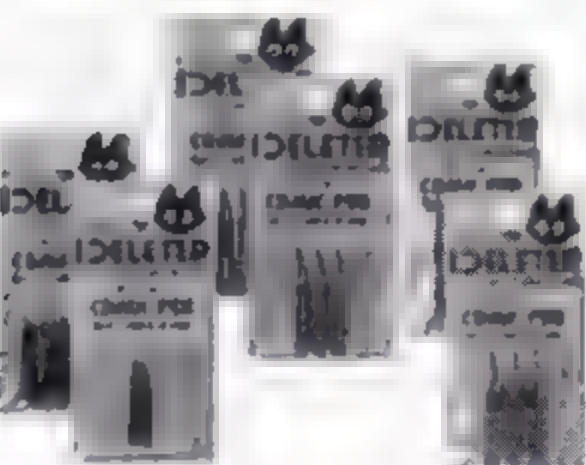
• G-Pen Inking Nib (3pcs)
G-pen is very elastic and drawing main lines or flash line
AR-DEL3411004 $2.95

• Maru-Pen Inking Nib (2pcs)
Maru-pen is good for drawing details
AR-DEL-3411002 $2.50

• Saji-Pen Inking Nib (10pcs)
Saji-pen is smooth and easy to draw all kinds of lines.
AR-DEL3411007 $6.95

• Saji-Pen Inking Nib (3pcs)
Saji-pen is smooth and easy to draw all kinds of lines
AR-DEL3411006 $3.95

DELETER INKS
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Works well drawing lines and painting.
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• Deleter Black 2
Permanent Ink, can not be removed with an eraser
AR-DEL3410003 $4.95
• Deleter Black 3
Completely waterproof with mat finish
AR-DEL 3410004 $4.95

• Deleter White 1
Great for touch ups and white details
AR-DEL 3410002 $4.95
• Deleter White 2
Great for touch ups and white details. Waterproof
AR-DEL 3410006 $4.95

Deleter Neopiko Line Pen
A super dark alcohol marker-type line drawing pen
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• AR-DEL3115010 Neopiko Line 1

• AR-DEL3115020 Neopiko Line 2

• AR-DEL3115030 Neopiko Line 3

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• AR-DEL3115100 Neopiko Line 1 0
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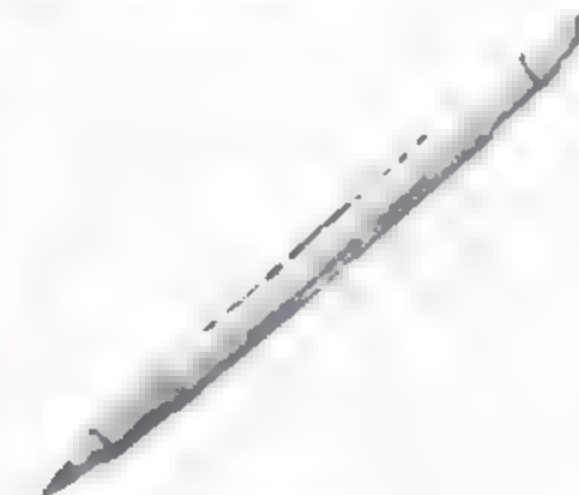
NEOPIKO MARKERS
Neopiko markers are alcohol-based markers that are great for diffusion effects. Their dark colors contrast sharply with the whiteness of paper, making beautiful lines and clear vibrant colors. Great for coloring illustrations and comics. These 144 different colored markers are available in sets. (Note: Color Codes identifies the colors in that set. Consult the Color Key.)

• Neopiko Marker S1 Set Starter Set
36 markers, 35 colors
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• Neopiko Marker 36A Set
36 - colors Coffee Ivory, Blush Pink, Powder Pink, Light Brown, Ocher Beige, Naples Yellow, Light Orange, Pink Beige, Apricot, Beige, Sun Tan, Anise, Sweet Pink, Orchid, Pastel Blue, Celadon, Celery, White lilly, Opal Green, Pale Violet Mauvette, Saxe Blue, Pale Sky, Sepia, Garnet, Old Rose, Cobalt Blue, Penwinkle, Ever Green, Elm Green, Holly Green, Eggplant, Violet, Pumpkin, Cocca Brown
AR-DEL-311-0203 $84.95

• Neopiko Marker 36B Set
36 - colors Primrose, Yellow, Marigold, Ice Blue, Light Aqua, Carmine, Raspberry, Lettuce Green, Peony, Light Purple, Ice Green, Mint Green, Lemon Yellow, Brilliant Yellow, Cerulean Blue, Strawberry, Signal Red, Antique Blue, Grass Green, Bellflower Scarlet, Magenta, Vivid Pink, Apple Green, Cool Grey 1, Cool Grey 2, Cool Grey 3, Cool Grey 4, Cool Grey 5, Cool Grey 6, Cool Grey 7 Cool Grey 8, Warm Grey 1, Warm Grey 3 Warm Grey 5, Warm Grey 7
AR-DEL311-0204 $84.95

• Neopiko Marker 72A Set
72 colors - Pale Pink, Shell Pink, Peach, Coral Pink, Sand, Pastel Peach, Flesh, Salmon Pink, Maize, Sunlight Yellow, Cream Brown Gold, Terra-cotta, Autumn Leaf, Maroon, Black, Yellow Ochre, Dark Brown, Neutral 1, Neutral 3 Neutral 5, Neutral 7, Neutral 9, Pale Yellow, Pale Lemon, Aqua Green, Baby Blue, Pale Green, Mist Green, Pale mauve, Pale Lilac, Pale Blue, Solvent, Baby Pink, Baby Green, Aqua, Med Blue, Turquoise, Rose Pink, Salvia Blue, Steel Blue, Spring Green, Vivid Yellow, Moss Green, Lavender, Tropical, Dull Pink, Dandelion, Sky Blue, Pink, Tabacco Brown, Vivid Red, Ultramarine, Vivid Green, Olive Green, Ins. Orange, Cherry Pink, Emerald, Peacock Green, Cherry Red, Mustard, Burnt Umber, Crimson, Poppy Red, Oriental Blue, Jungle Green, French Blue, Vermilion, Royal Purple, Viridian
AR-DEL311-0202 $160.00

• Neopiko Marker 72B Set
72 colors - Coffee, Ivory, Blush Pink, Powder Pink, Light Brown, Ocher Beige, Naples Yellow, Light Orange, Pink Beige, Apricot, Beige, Sun Tan, Anise, Sweet Pink, Orchid, Pastel Blue, Celadon, Celery, White lilly, Opal Green, Pale Violet, Mauvette, Saxe Blue, Pale Sky, Sepia, Garnet, Old Rose, Cobalt Blue, Penwinkle, Ever Green, Elm Green, Holly Green, Eggplant, Violet, Pumpkin, Cocca Brown, Primrose, Yellow, Marigold, Ice Blue, Light Aqua, Carmine, Raspberry, Lettuce Green, Peony, Light Purple, Ice Green, Mint Green, Lemon Yellow, Brilliant Yellow, Cerulean Blue, Strawberry, Signal Red, Antique Blue, Grass Green, Bellflower, Scarlet, Magenta, Vivid Pink, Apple Green, Cool Grey 1, Cool Grey 2, Cool Grey 3, Cool Grey 4, Cool Grey 5, Cool Grey 6, Cool Grey 7, Cool Grey 8, Warm Grey 1, Warm Grey 3, Warm Grey 5, Warm Grey 7
AR-DEL311-0205 $160.00

• Neopiko Marker (Skin Set)
Color Code T1
12 colors - 12 Color - Pale Pink, Shell Pink, Peach, Coral Pink, Sand, Pastel Peach, Flesh, Salmon Pink, Maize, Sunlight Yellow, Cream
AR-DEL311-0101 $28.95

• Neopiko Marker (Brown & Gray Set)
Color Code T2
12 colors - Brown Gold, Terra-cotta, Autumn Leaf, Maroon, Black, Yellow Ochre, Dark Brown, Neutral 1, Neutral 3, Neutral 5, Neutral 7, Neutral 9
AR-DEL311-0102 $28.95

• Neopiko Marker (Pale Color Set)
Color Code: T3
12 colors Colors - Pale Yellow, Pale Lemon, Aqua Green, Baby Blue, Pale Green, Mist Green, Pale mauve, Pale Lilac, Pale Blue, Solvent, Baby Pink, Baby Green
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• Neopiko Marker (Light Color Set)
Color Code: T4
12 colors Colors - Aqua, Med Blue, Turquoise, Rose Pink, Salvia Blue, Steel Blue, Spring Green, Vivid Yellow, Moss Green, Lavender, Tropical, Dull Pink
AR-DEL311-0104 $28.95

• Neopiko Marker (Middle Color Set)
Color Code T5
12 colors - Dandelion, Sky Blue, Pink, Tabacco Brown, Vivid Red, Ultramarine, Vivid Green, Olive Green, Iris, Orange, Cherry Pink, Emerald
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• Neopiko Marker (Dark Color Set)
Color Code T6
12 colors - Peacock Green, Cherry Red, Mustard, Burnt Umber, Crimson, Poppy Red, Oriental Blue, Jungle Green, French Blue, Vermilion, Royal Purple, Vindran
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• Neopiko Marker (Skin Variation Set)
Color Code: T7
12 colors- Coffee, Ivory, Blush Pink, Powder Pink, Light Brown, Ocher Beige, Naples Yellow, Light Orange, Pink Beige, Apricot, Beige, Sun Tan
AR-DEL311-0107 $28.95

• Neopiko Marker (Super Pale Set)
Color Code: T8
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• Neopiko Marker (Smokey Color Set)
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• Neopiko Marker (Light Variation Set)
Color Code T10
12 colors - Primrose, Yellow, Marigold, Ice Blue, Light Aqua, Carmine, Raspberry, Lettuce Green, Peony, Light Purple, Ice Green, Mint Green
AR-DEL311-0110 $28.95

• Neopiko Marker (Middle Variation)
Color Code: T11
12 colors - Lemon Yellow, Brilliant Yellow, Cerulean Blue, Strawberry, Signal Red, Antique Blue, Grass Green, Bellflower, Scarlet, Magenta, Vivid Pink, Apple Green.
AR-DEL311-0111 $28.95

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Color Code: T12
12 colors - Cool Grey 1, Cool Grey 2, Cool Grey 3, Cool Grey 4, Cool Grey 5, Cool Grey 6, Cool Grey 7, Cool Grey 8, Warm Grey 1, Warm Grey 3, Warm Grey 5, Warm Grey 7
AR-DEL311-0112 $28.95

• Neopika SOLVENT Marker
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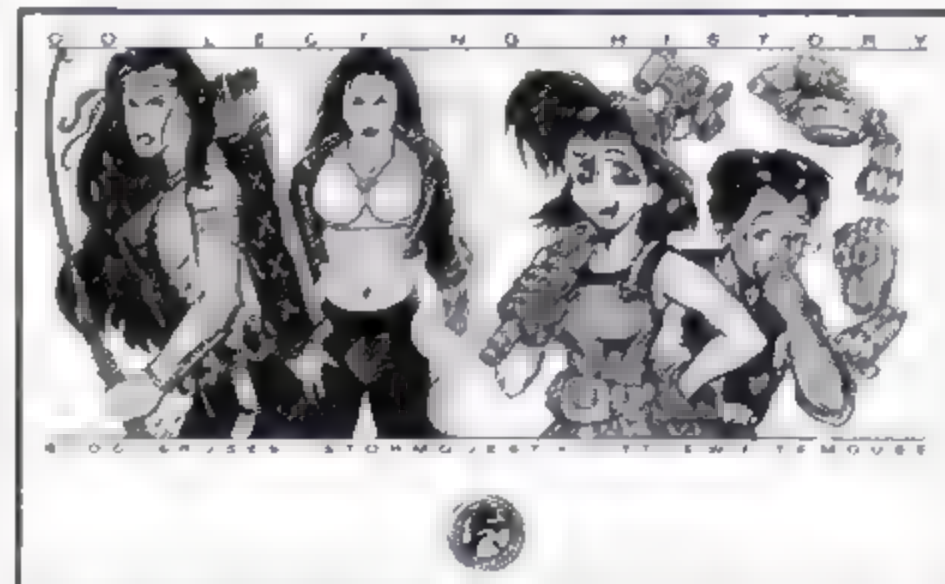
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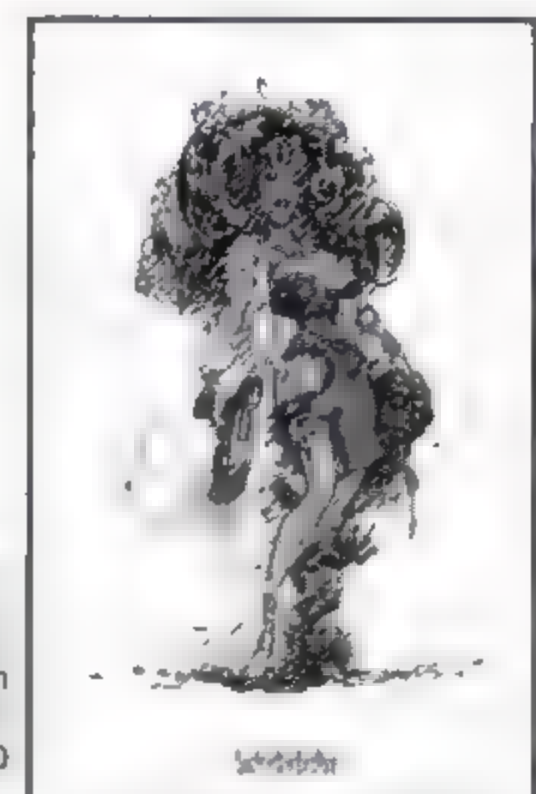- CB1508 $9.00

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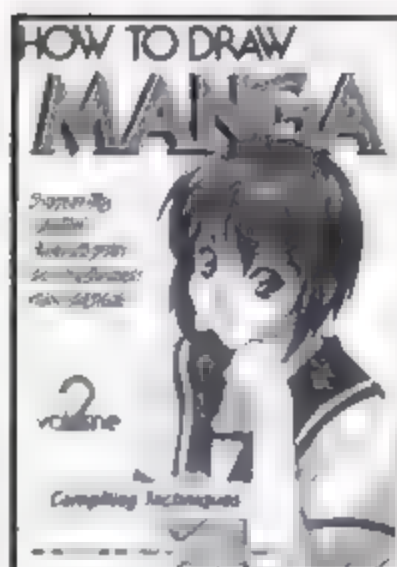- CB2012 $12.00

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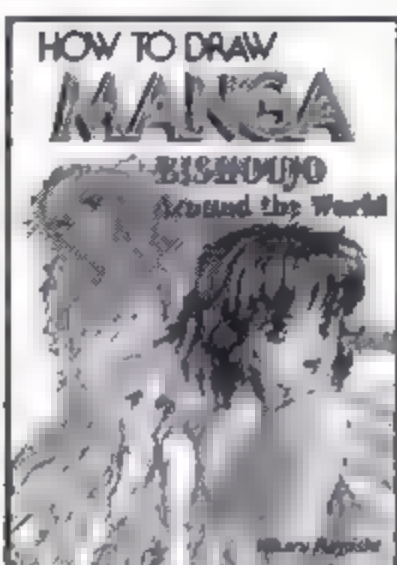HOW TO DRAW MANGA
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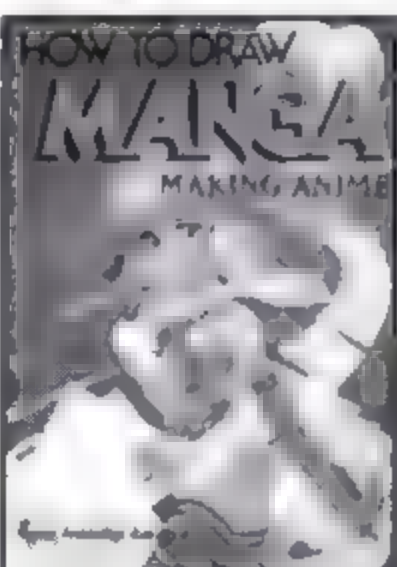
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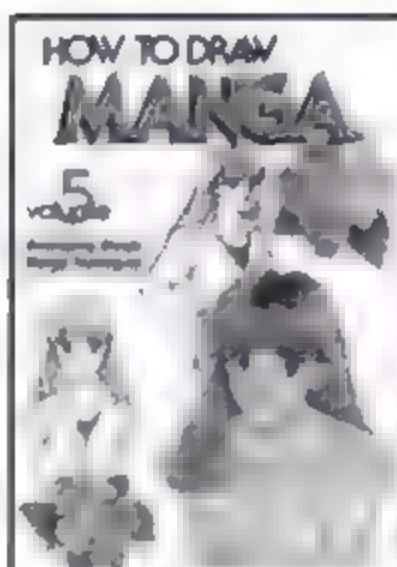
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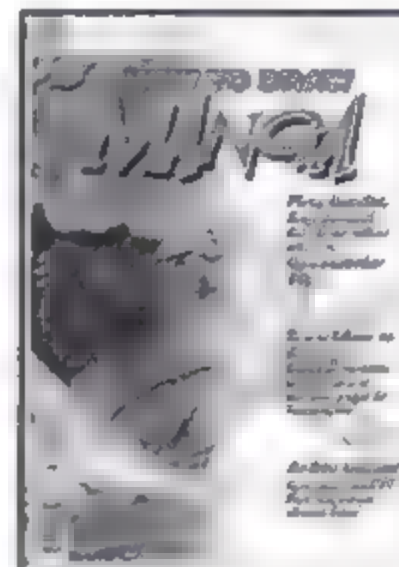
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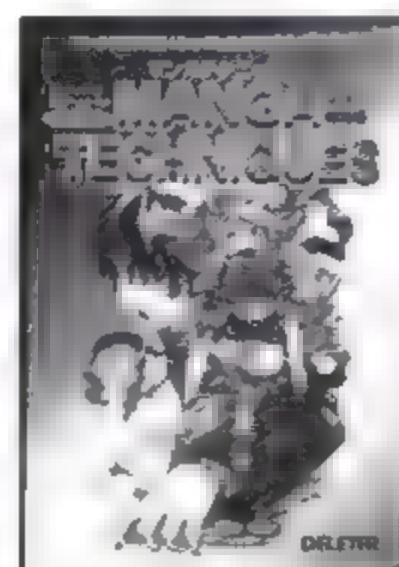
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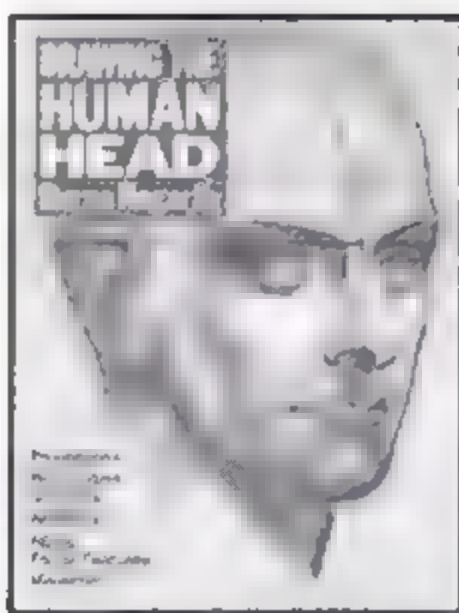
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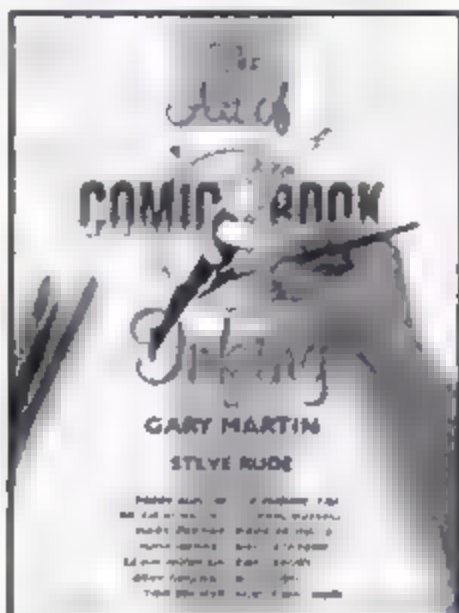
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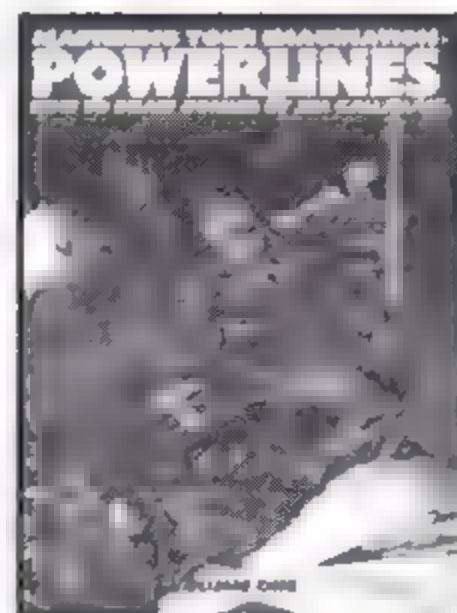
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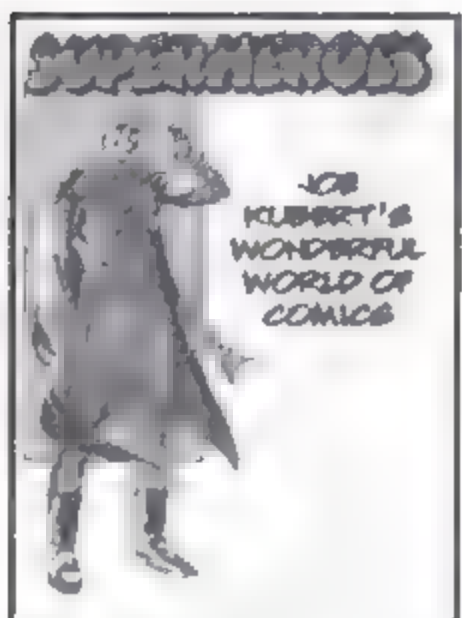
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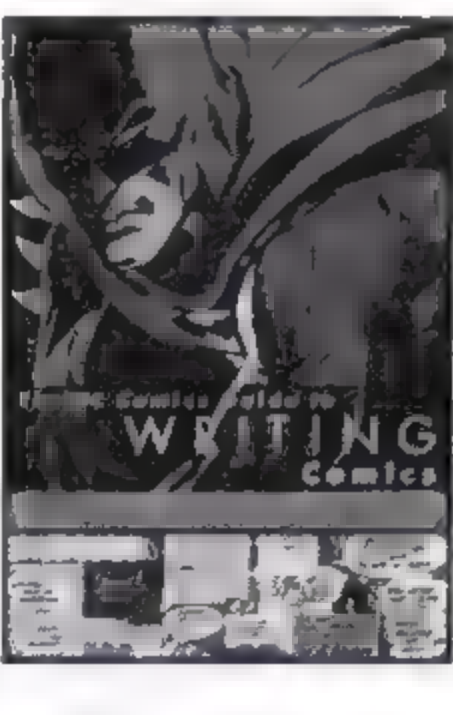
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MITCH BYRD'S
Howto Draw

Some Notes About Gadgets

Machinery and gadgets in comics and illustrations are not bound by the laws of physics that limit technology in the real world, which allows us to draw "stuff" that is as fantastic as our creativity allows. Of course, the illustrator is usually tasked to draw within a story setting that has perceived physical limits which demand selective limitations on the creative process - in English; make sure the gadgets look like they will actually work in the story.

As a comic illustrator, you might receive your technology task in a number of fashions, dependant on the company style, deadline, and other creative hands involved, particularly the writer and editor in this instance. After reading the plot or story you're working on, you might be able to mentally construct the device(s) in question entirely on your own. This often happens working "Marvel style," where the penciler receives a plot, not necessarily a full script, and often blocks out gadgetry according to its storyline function. Other times, the writer may take an active hand in guiding your engineering. Depending on the writer, this input can go from laboriously detailed, exacting written descriptions of the gadgets, to more simple directives such as " give me something steam-punky," or "semi-organic toaster oven."

Depending on your proficiency, interest, and that all-important deadline, all of these situations obviously have their pros and cons. But most importantly, as I said at the beginning – make those gadgets look like they actually function. Of course, another thing to take into consideration is just how detailed your gadget is going to be. That depends on a lot of other factors we won't go into right now, but in comics, speed is often a critical factor. If it's not practical for production – or for the story – you might not wish to make your contraptions overly detailed, especially if they're going to be shown repeatedly and from a variety of angles. Making that extra nut, bolt, and doohickey consistent from page to page, panel to panel, and worm's eye to bird's eye can be time consuming.
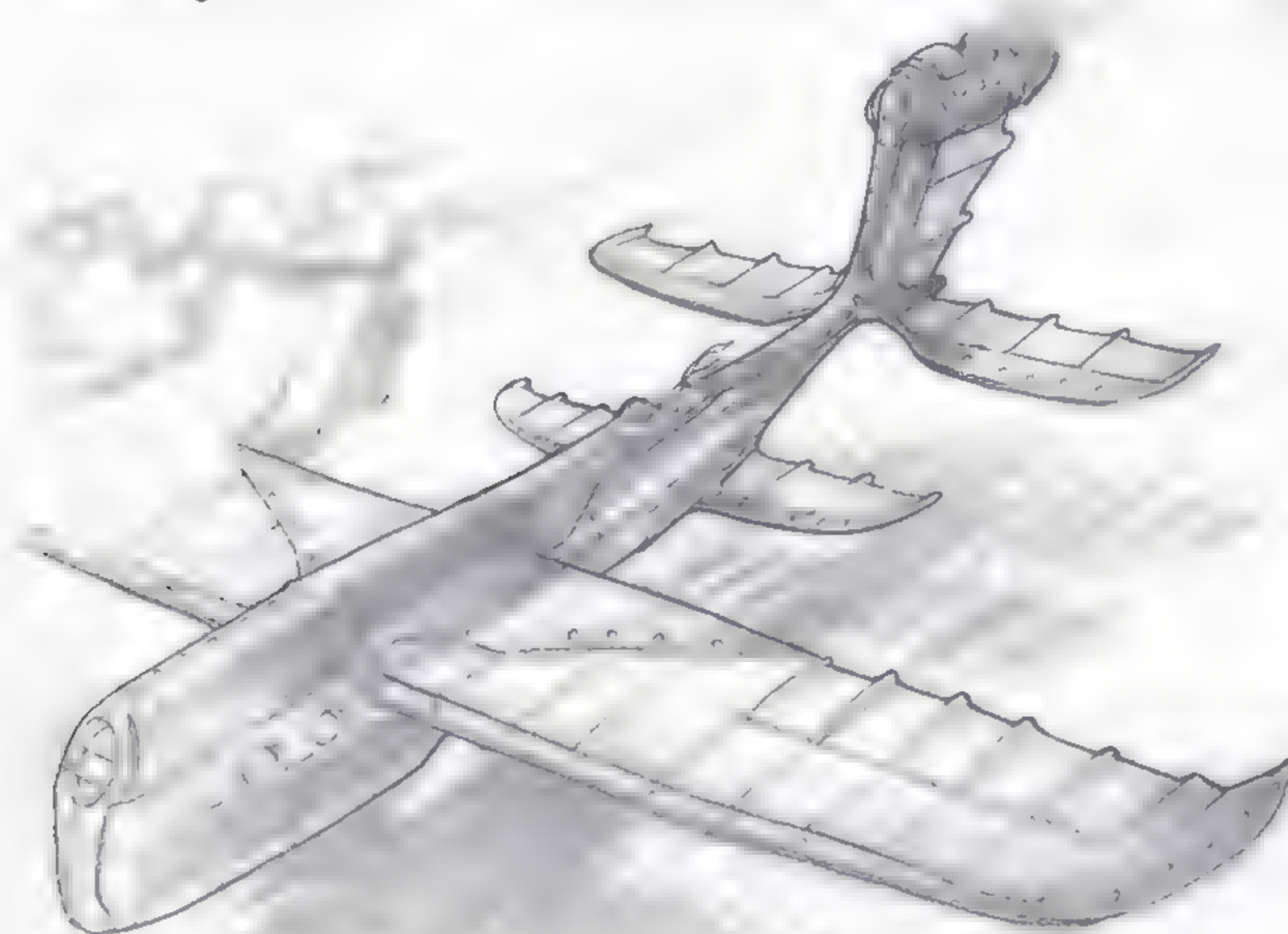

#1
When you study human anatomy you don't just study how the body functions, but also how it functions in a particular environment. The same applies with machinery. No matter the approach, try to keep in mind how the machine itself works, as well as how it works in a particular setting.
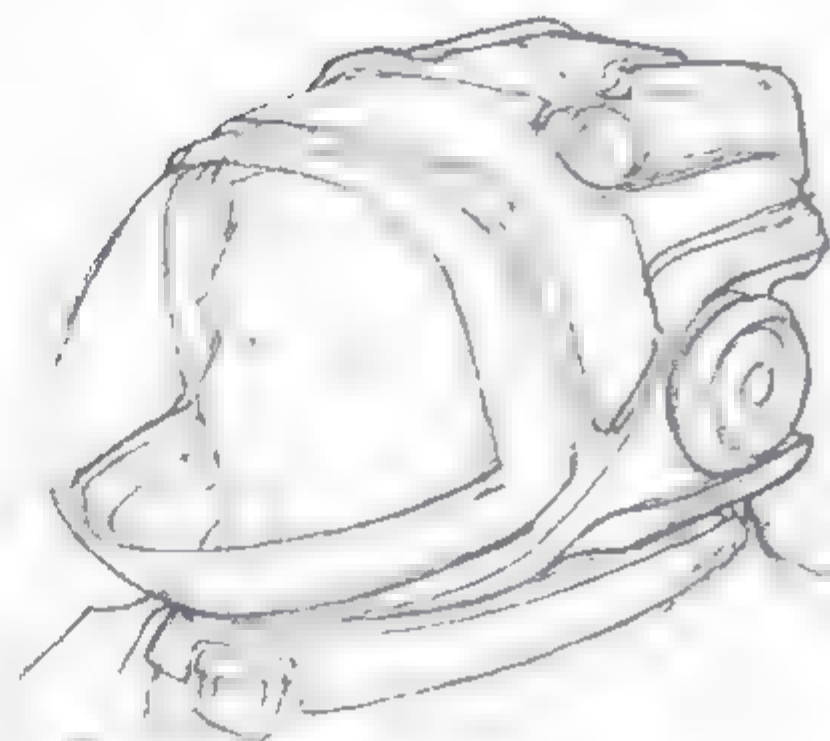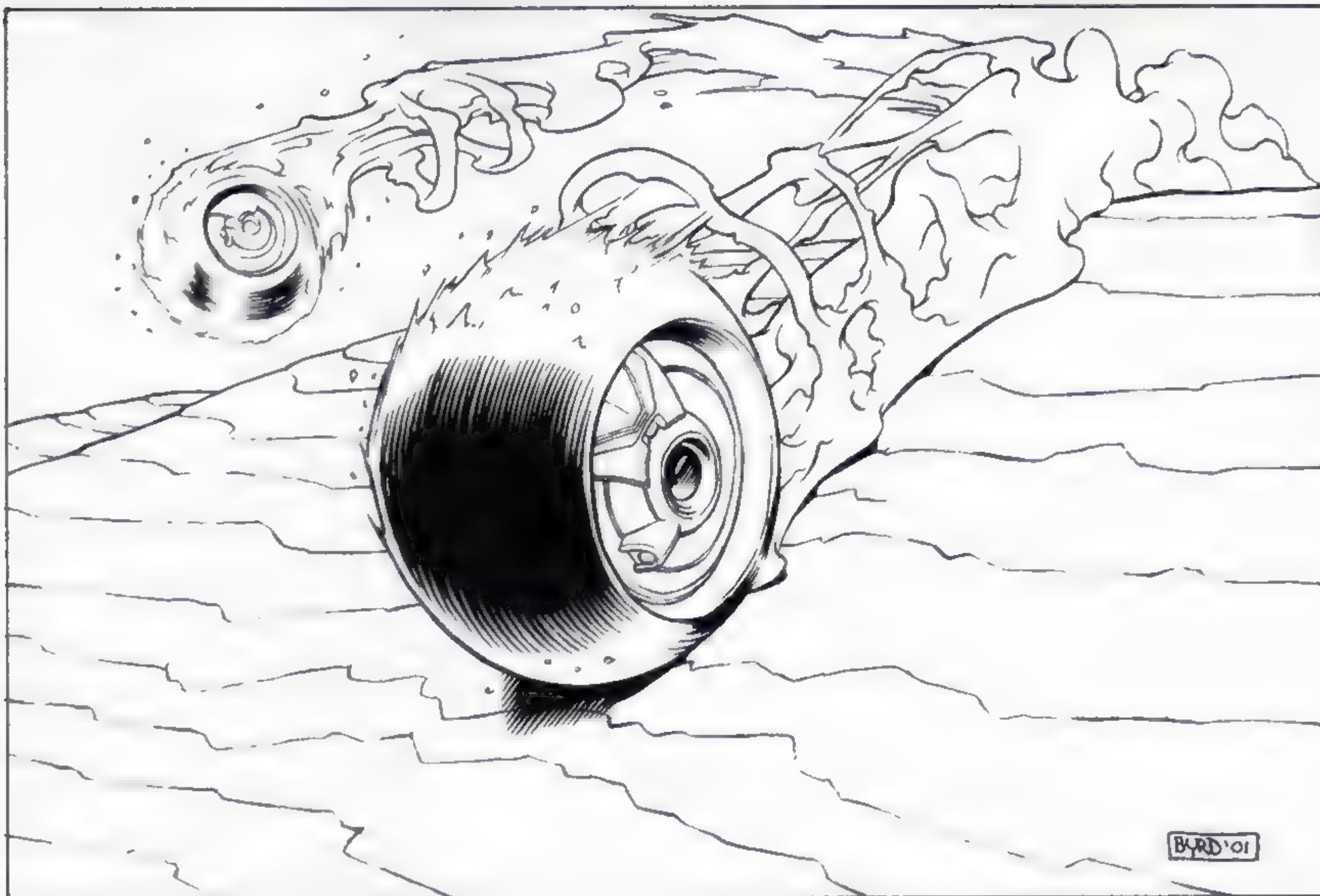
#2.
You can explore the functionality of various gizmos from your mind by building them from basic shapes, and adding and taking away as it suits the needs of the storyline.
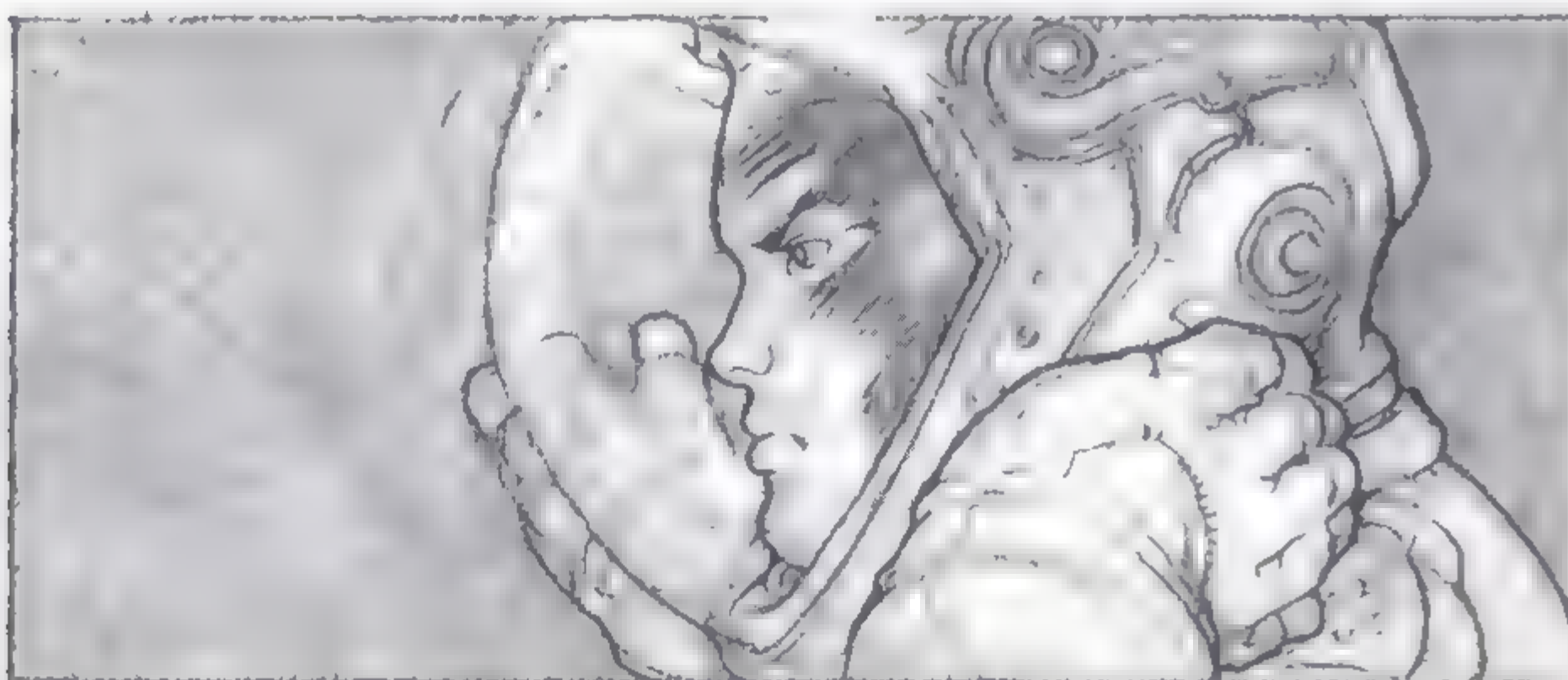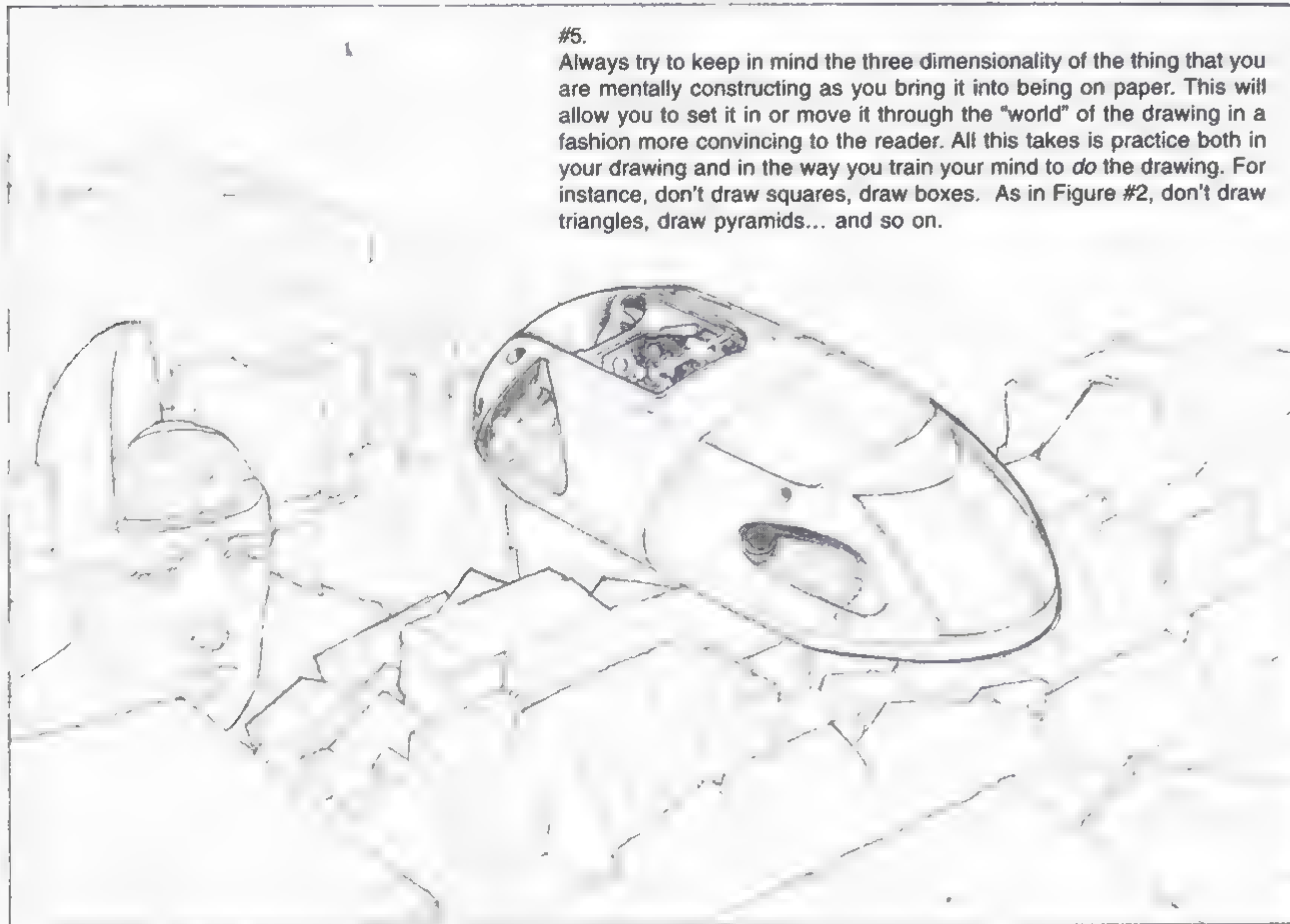

#3.
The mixing of geometric forms can be made into anything, such as a helmet...

#4.
Or a one- wheeled car...

#5.
Always try to keep in mind the three dimensionality of the thing that you are mentally constructing as you bring it into being on paper. This will allow you to set it in or move it through the "world" of the drawing in a fashion more convincing to the reader. All this takes is practice both in your drawing and in the way you train your mind to *do* the drawing. For instance, don't draw squares, draw boxes. As in Figure #2, don't draw triangles, draw pyramids... and so on.
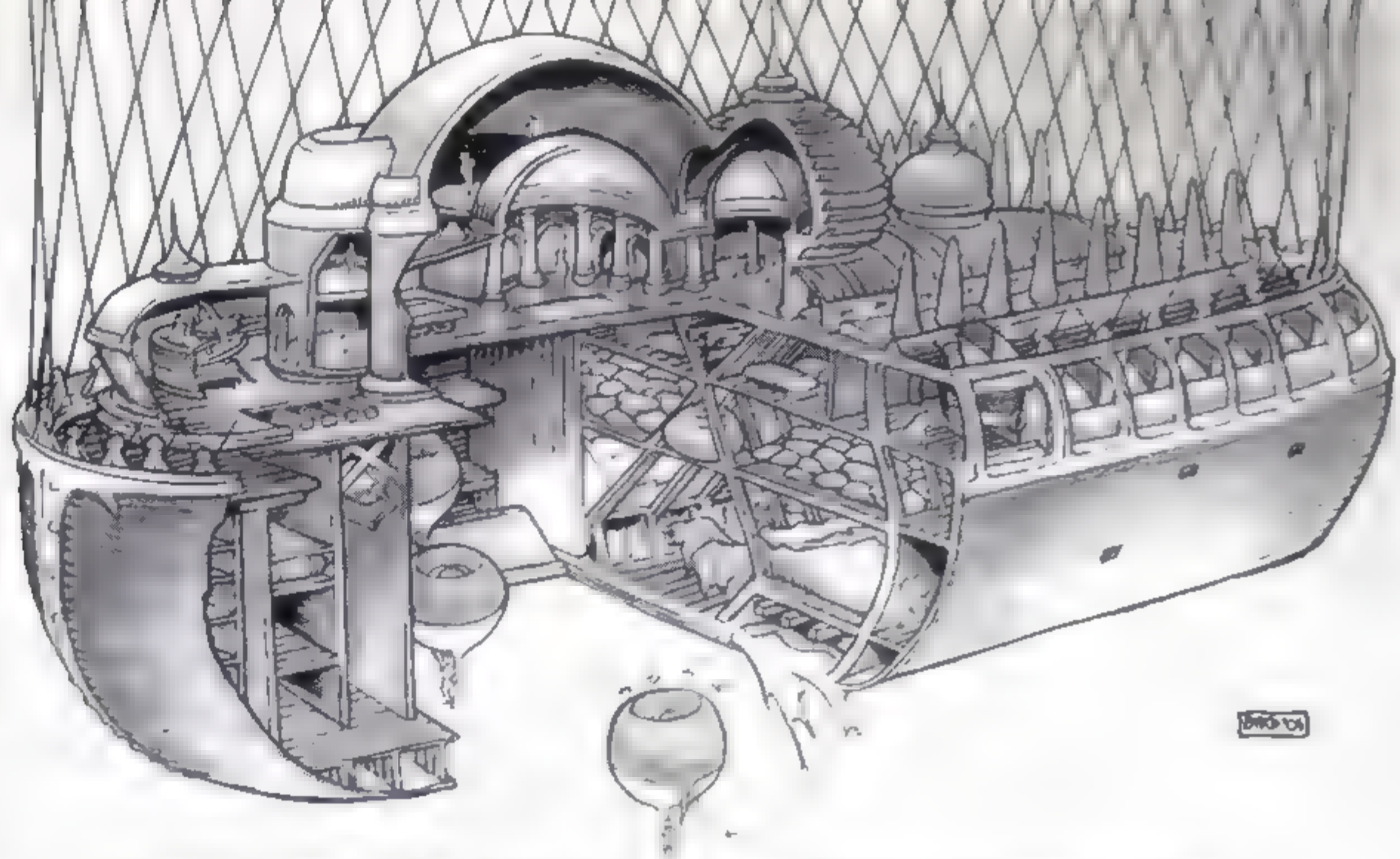
#6.
When you get a handle on these shapes moving in an out of each other (also as in Figure #2), you can make your machine stuff the setting itself.
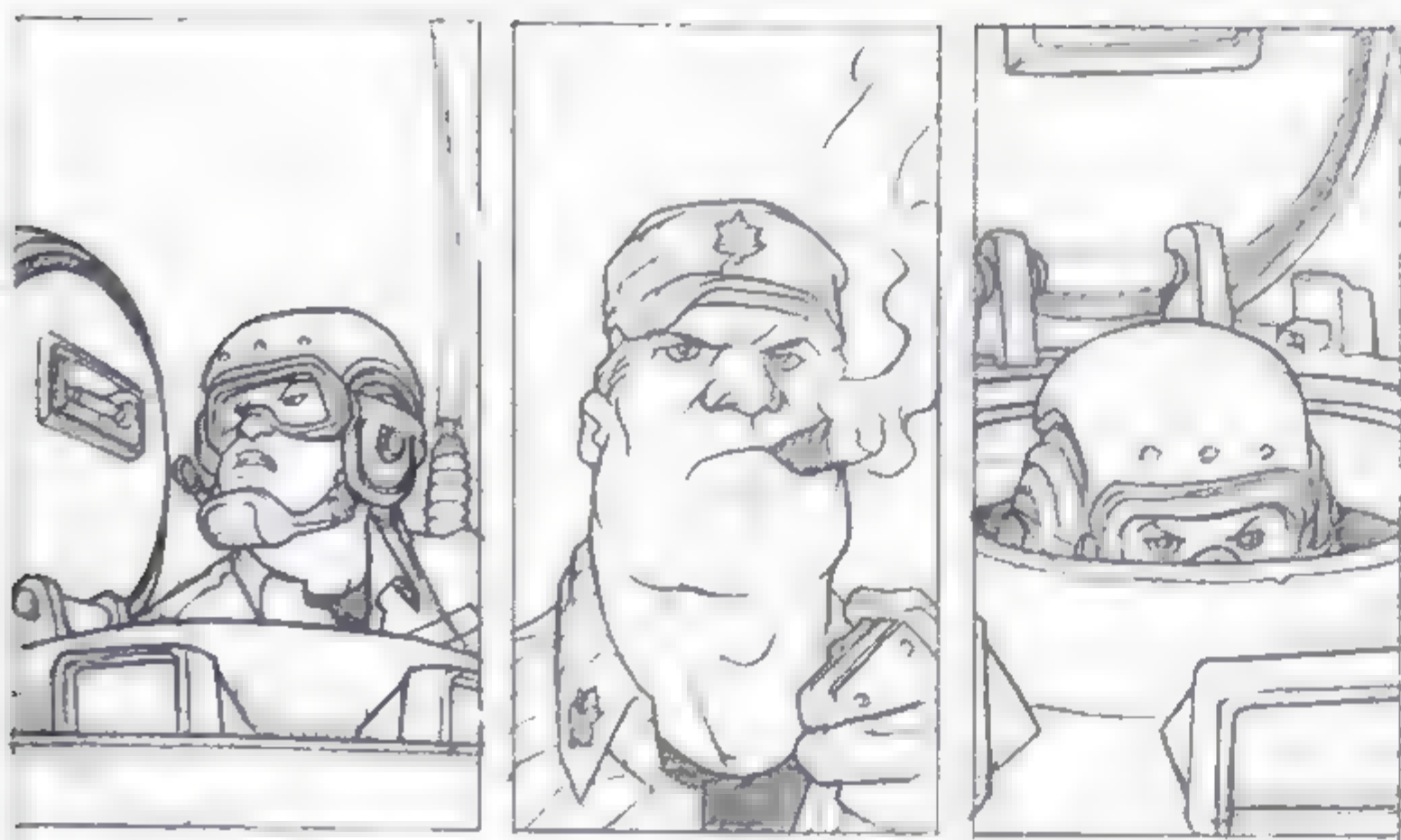
#7.
All of your practice drawing stuff will come in handy when you draw your comic pages. On this particular page illustratively there are machines and gizmos in most of the panels, but graphically there are just boxes and cylinders intersecting (once again, as in Figure #2)..
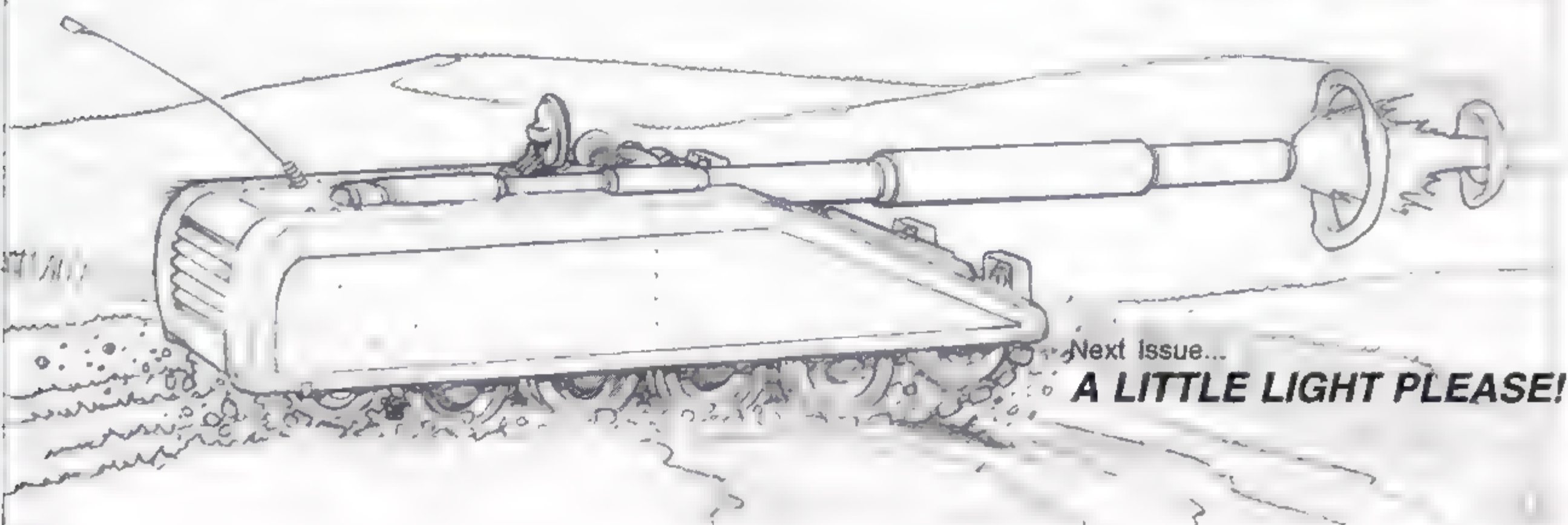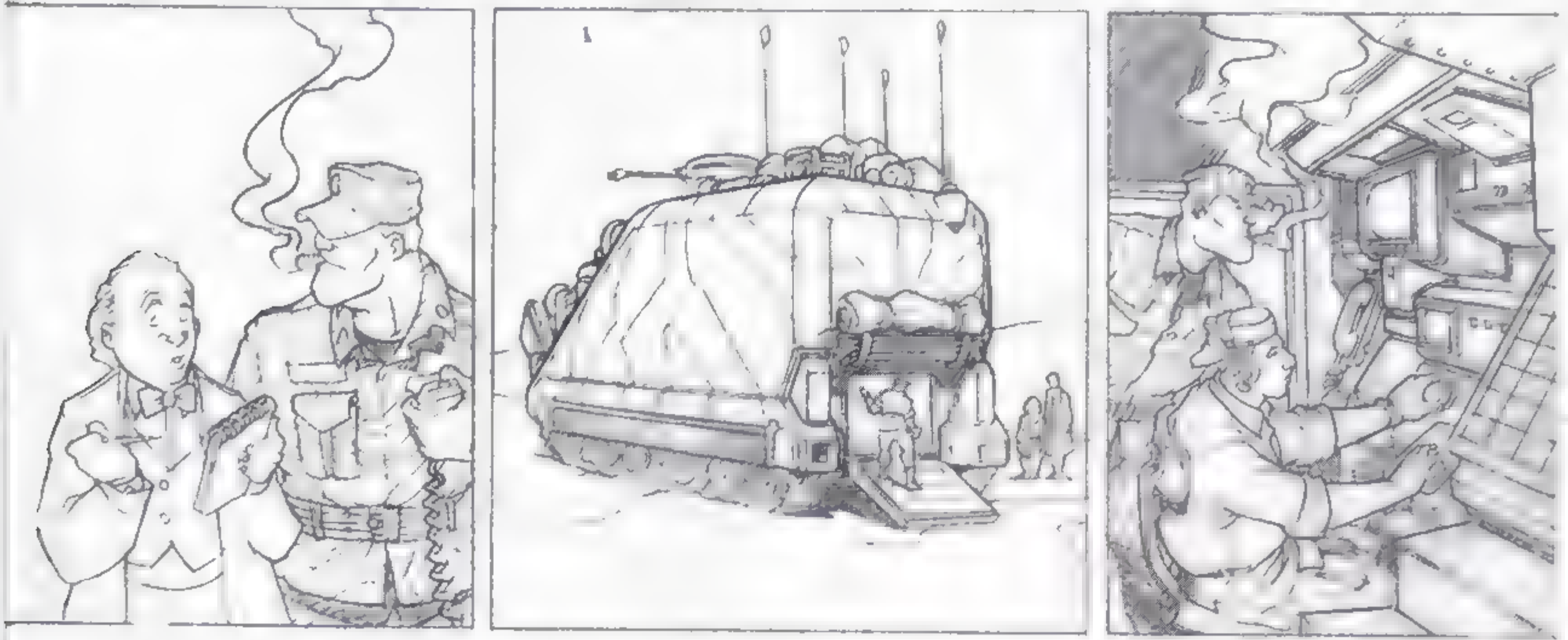
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A LITTLE LIGHT PLEASE!

TOM BIERBAUM'S
The Universe at Your Finger Tips
Thoughts on Scripting Comic Books
The Difference Between Men and Women

Most of the people who read this magazine are probably male. Most of the people who read comics are male. Most of the people who write comics are male. And for a lot of you aspiring writers, that may lead to some uneasiness about how you can portray believable, accurate, "real" female characters.

It's a big question because, now that comic-book readers are mostly teen and adult males, most fans are very interested in female characters, perhaps more so than the male characters. Certainly, many of the breakthrough comics of the past couple decades showcased some unforgettable female characters.

I don't know how well I ever did writing women characters myself, and any success I enjoyed might have had something to do with working constantly in collaboration with my wife Mary. But if taking on a female writing partner isn't necessarily your choice or an option, let's explore other approaches that might help you in depicting characters of both sexes.

1. Remember That Men and Women Are Very Different.

But also that...

2. Men and Women Are Pretty Much the Same.

What do I mean by this? If you think about it, there are certain ways men and women are unmistakably and biologically different from the moment of conception all the way to their deaths. *Any* two humans are unmistakably and biologically different from birth to death. And yet there are gigantic and profound commonalities of human experience for any two humans as well.

So as writers, we can't just throw up our hands and say anyone who's different than us can't be fully understood, so we just aren't qualified to write them. Understand the commonalities between you and your characters and build on them until your characters, male or female, are all living, breathing, interesting human beings.

And a first step in accomplishing this might be to recognize that in the comic-book business, as it's currently structured...

3. The Differences Between the Sexes Isn't That Much of an Issue.

Most female characters in mainstream comics these days are there for the entertainment of an overwhelmingly male readership. Therefore, they tend to be very feminine in outward appearance but otherwise the kind of characters that advance male-appeal stories—in other words, they're essentially male personalities in female bodies.

Their methods of conflict resolution, their mating desires, their physical strength and capabilities, their language—in a lot of ways, many female characters in contemporary comics have more in common with, say, Wolverine than the average woman you'd run into down at the DMV.

Should we all feel scandalized and embarrassed by this? Not necessarily. It's what the current audience prefers. And the job of fiction isn't to present average people behaving in their usual manner; it's to find exceptional characters doing exceptional things that fascinate the audience. And there *are* some real-life women who are like today's over-sexed, ass-kicking super-heroines, so why shouldn't comic writers and readers feel free to enjoy such depictions.

But I'll certainly salute and encourage any writer who's interested in going further — in writing female characters who are a little more than male personalities in women's bodies. And here are a few suggestions that might help you do it...

4. Project Yourself into Your Female Characters.

Recognize and appreciate that a lot of your experience is universally human, and applicable to virtually any character you care to write. Start with that and deal with your female characters as if they feel and react pretty much the way you do.

Put yourself in this character's place, and then figure out how you would honestly act if you found yourself in that world. Just being yourself in the circumstances of your character will give you a running start on portraying this different individual.

When my wife and I wrote the character Jenn LeBeck of *StormQuest*, who was secretly infatuated with her muscular teammate Kurt Emminger, it wasn't hard for me to put myself in her place. All I had to do was remember what it was like to have a crush on someone of the opposite sex and then project those feelings onto a female character. No need to assume the emotions are a lot different for a young woman than a young man. In fact, one of the strongest feelings of identification I ever experienced while reading a comic book was when Jim Shooter had the Legionnaire Duo Damsel cry herself to sleep over her impossible crush on Superboy. The fact that the character was a girl didn't matter; almost all of us know what it's like to fall for someone who's unattainable.

But of course, not everything we go through is universal. More often, the way we feel and respond in a certain circumstance reflects who we are, and sometimes whether we're male or female. In those cases...

5. Appreciate and Apply the Differences Between You and Your Character.

Figure out how this woman's experience, point of view and approach to life differ from yours, and start factoring those differences into the character's actions and point of view.

Maybe if *you* had a crush on a girl completely out of your league you'd never just mope around about it. You'd figure what the heck and let her know how you feel and see what happens. But before you automatically assume that's the universal response in this situation, think about the female character you're writing. Is that how she'd handle things? Is she willing to risk rejection and all the potential repercussions — possibly a lifetime of taunts, for example — on the slight chance this seemingly unattainable object of her affection might actually be interested in her?

Looking at this dynamic in the other direction, our *Dead Kid* hero, Morty Coyle, was infatuated with the cheerleader Susana. If I simply projected my own personality onto Susana she'd have been very nice and friendly toward Morty, even if she had no real interest in him. But Susana isn't me. She's long ago learned that she has the looks and personality to eventually leave the rest of the gang at Henry O. Flipper High far behind, and that's where her head is at. In her mind, she's already mapping out the accomplishments of her adult life, and she no longer even notices the

Most of us guys would be darn impressed by a zombie super-hero like Morty (Dead Kid) Coyle, but sometimes a woman is looking for something a little different in a man. To Susana, a young woman with looks, brains and ambition, Morty isn't exactly the kind of guy she's set her sights on.

dozens of love-sick boys at Flipper who'revying for her attention. Because of who Susana is, Morty barely registers as a blip on her radar screen.

This is an example of how you understand your characters by understanding yourself. Think through what makes you act and think the way you do, then figure out what makes your character act and think the way she does, then apply all of this brainwork to how your character acts.

This probably seems kind of self-evident. It's really how a writer portrays any character that isn't purely biographical. Male-female differences don't have to be any more difficult to address than rich-poor, young-old, parent-child, black-white, attractive-unattractive, shy-bold, conservative-liberal, American-foreign, contemporary-historical, etc. Of course, you'll never actually be a member of the opposite sex (barring extensive surgical intervention), but you'll never be a lot of the things you'll be writing, and that doesn't mean you can't write good, interesting, and believable characters of all types.

6. What Are the Real, Actual Differences Between Men and Women?

Well, if I could actually answer that question, I could write an instructional manual and retire on the royalties. But if you've never thought about the biological imperatives wired into men and women, start doing it now. Think about how nature had to program males and females to get this species to survive hundreds of thousands of years in the wild. Appreciate that this programming is still in us, and isn't going to go away just because in the last few centuries we've built a very different world around us than our ancestors knew.

For this species to flourish in the wild, men had to seek out women for their fertility and potential as a child-rearer. Women had to seek out men based on the degree of commitment they demonstrated to that woman, and their ability to protect and provide for her over many, many years of raising the next generation of the species. I'm sure a true student of anthropology could poke a lot of holes in this simplistic analysis, but if you think in these terms, it isn't such a mystery why

men are obsessed with women's breasts (designed, after all, to feed our offspring) and their curvaceous bodies (wide hips are important in the bearing of children). And women are logically attracted to men who are powerful (to provide for and defend the family) and willing to make a commitment to their woman (so they'll be around to do that providing and defending).

On top of that, appreciate the different sex drives of men and women. For maximum fertility in the wild, men were given a pretty consistent, unrelenting sex drive, because a man's got to be ready when the time is right, yet his absolutely required role in reproduction ends almost immediately. A woman, on the other hand, has a more occasional and interrupted sex drive because she's committed to at least many years of necessary physical participation with each successful pregnancy.

There are certainly women who pursue sex as avidly as any man, but the reason that isn't typically the case is logical and wired into us.

As uncomfortable as we may be with some of these roles in contemporary society, we should recognize that a couple decades of consciousness-raising isn't going to change the biological designs that are necessarily built into us as a species to get us through hundreds of thousands of years in the wild.

I don't say any of this to imply that you have to depict your characters reflecting these biological directives. We're blessed to live in an era where men and women are free to essentially live a life of their own choosing. And it's probably generally more interesting to write about people who rise above these typical gender patterns than to simply give your readers sex-based roles that have existed for millennia.

The point in discussing these perhaps half-baked anthropological concepts is not to try get you to categorize the sexes, but to give you a few starting points as you try to figure out how your characters of the opposite sex might be different from yourself.

7. You Can't Really Understand the Opposite Sex If You Don't Understand Your Own.

If you really want to understand what it's like to be a woman in today's world, you better take a good, hard look at what men in today's world are like, and how that impacts women.

For all those people ultimately interested in reproducing themselves and raising families, finding a mate and then living with him or her is a major force shaping their entire adult lives. What men generally look for and reward in women, and what women generally look for and reward in men, powerfully shapes a society and everyone's behaviors within it. If an American male could get the woman of his dreams by shaving his head and tattooing her name up there, we'd have millions of tattooed craniums atop our men.

When we had to come up with a new Emerald Empress villain for the early issues of the *Legionnaires* comic, our editor suggested a great storyline in which the new Empress is driven to villainy, in part because of mistreatment by a couple of the studly guys in the Legion. This particular girl was insecure, overweight, and pimply, characteristics a lot of adolescent boys tend to punish, and some of the Legionnaires did exactly that, while pointedly rewarding other females who were closer to their physical ideal. It's an example of how one female character was very much shaped by the priorities and behavior of the males in her world.

I'll let you decide for yourself what men in contemporary society are encouraging and rewarding in women, and what women are encouraging and rewarding in men. Just think about it and let this analysis generate some insights into your characters of the opposite sex.

8. Imagine Having to Live in a World Full of Men.

Also keep in mind my above discussion about the difference in male and female sex drives. If you're depicting an attractive comic-book woman (a phrase that's almost redundant on today's market), think about what it's like to live in a world where you're the object of desire for the half of the population that has this unrelenting sex drive. Even if just ten percent of that half of the population is obnoxious, self-centered and

I'LL LET YOU THINK ABOUT IT.

BUT NEXT TIME, SWEETIE, YOU DON'T GET OFF SO EASY.

Your sexy female characters can be a little more interesting if there's a REASON they show off their attributes. For example, Pandora of "StormQuest" uses her considerable physical appeal to distract and manipulate guys like Warren LeBeck into unwittingly assisting her thievery.

crude, you're still going to be dealing with unwanted, repulsive advances on a regular basis.

We comic-book writers can and do depict worlds where sexy babes magically bop around in skimpy outfits and don't have to waste much time fending off boorish would-be suitors. That's okay, comic books present fantasy worlds, and that's as good a fantasy as any. But you can take your sexy female characters a few steps further if you figure out why they'd show off their attributes

in a world where male reactions to such women can be a significant problem.

One of the simpler answers might be that your female character uses her sexiness to distract and manipulate the males, which is what we did with the roguish Pandora character in *StormQuest*. Her tattered skin-tight jeans no doubt had a lot to do with her ability to consistently befuddle her male adversaries and maneuver Warren LeBeck into revealing whatever information Pandora needed to assist her thievery.

Another example from *StormQuest* was the android Shalimar, built by a power hungry, amoral scientist as a combination assistant and plaything. Naturally, this scientist would build Shalimar to be as physically attractive as possible. So her hyper attractiveness was there for a logical reason and helped us take her story line in some interesting, unusual directions.

9. Think for Yourself.

There's little in today's society that's more weighted and controversial than the role of women in society. A lot of people want everyone to agree that their particular set of answers to gender questions are the right ones and no further discussion or dissension is necessary.

That's, of course, baloney. Over the last few decades we've gone through a dramatic revolution in sexual roles, and we're going to spend generations sorting out all the implications, benefits, and consequences of those changes, making new changes to boot. Obviously there's going to be plenty of room for discussion and disagreement about sexual roles for a long time to come.

An example that's important to me is how often we tend to declare something "sexist" and start mounting all kinds of societal pressure to discourage it — something like the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue, which many view as exploitive of women. In fact, vastly more women read that issue than read a regular issue of *Sports Illustrated*, and that's despite decades of societal messages telling women they should be taking offense. Imagine what the female readership might be if we'd spent those decades telling women it's okay to be fascinated by the swimsuit issue. I think this example has a lot of application to the comic-book world where, on the one hand, female characters are served up almost completely for male consumption, but on the other hand, there's a lot of lip service paid to how wrong it is to create female characters designed for the pleasure of a mostly male readership.

If you think those male-focused depictions are wrong then that's fine, and you shouldn't feel the need to second-guess your opinion. But make sure you make this judgement for yourself. Don't appoint yourself defender of imagined female sensibilities, because you may someday discover you're frustrating as many female readers as you're helping by trying to decide what women do and don't want to see in their heroines.

Some people who oppose stereotyped female characters are the first to stereotype the tastes of women readers. A woman's taste shouldn't count less because she enjoys some form of entertainment that a third party has decided, on her behalf, is objectionable.

All of that said, I suggest looking for opportunities in your own work to show that all

kinds of women matter and can be interesting. It's possible to write comics about mostly very attractive people without sending out a message that only attractive people count. One of my favorite characters from *StormQuest* was Litlit, the brilliant, physically deformed scientist who secretly rebelled against her abusive amoral employer, and cleverly sabotaged his schemes. While that series had a wonderful cast of gorgeous women, Litlit's presence added variety and interest to the story and helped mitigate any implication that those gorgeous women were the only ones who mattered.

10. Writing Women is One Thing; Writing For Women is a Whole Different Matter.

We'd all like to see lots more women reading comics, and there's been all kinds of speculation over the years as to why more don't. First and foremost, though, we should recognize and accept that the genres that have almost completely taken over the business are male-oriented.

Of course, most of the comics are *made* by men, but that's less to the point than the fact that these men are usually more or less trying to please male *tastes*. There's no reason an all-male creative team couldn't do a comic that many women would love, so long as those creators understood and aimed to please some type of female taste. If you really want to know what women might read in mass numbers, think about entertainment that really *works* for women in mass numbers. Romance novels, the movie *Titanic*, Harry Potter, soap operas, comic strips like *Cathy* and *Rex Morgan, M.D.*, etc. Notice in all of these instances there isn't a great deal of action, and certainly not much violence. Character development and relationships are usually a lot more important

SIGH

ANYTHING ELSE OF INTEREST TO REPORT?

Here's another example: Shalimar of "StormQuest" was actually an android built for the personal pleasure of the arrogant, unfeeling scientist Trimalion. Naturally he built her to his standards of female beauty and programmed her to be not the least bit shy about showing off.

TRIMALION MUST BE TOLD.

There's nothing wrong with depicting highly attractive characters, male or female. But sometimes the most interesting characters are the ones who give the readers something else. The clever scientist Litlit, for example, was one of my favorite "StormQuest" characters, partly because she was a change of pace amidst the many gorgeous ladies gracing that series.

than physical conflict. The lead male characters are not so much physically imposing (though in their own ways, they're usually formidable) as complex, sensitive, and in most cases, deeply devoted to the central female character.

I'm guessing some of you are scoffing at these examples as representative of a kind of corny, hackneyed mass-appeal pap that doesn't truly speak to the intelligent, contemporary woman of the 21st century. But I think such a response is like saying some women — in fact, millions of women - don't really count, because they're not meeting a sophistication test you want to apply to one gender but not the other. In any case, if you immediately disqualify vast portions of the female population from your potential pool of readers, that's hardly a savvy first step toward establishing a meaningful female readership.

I'm not suggesting we should all be making super-hero comics that mimic these high female-appeal genres. Super-heroes have almost always appealed a lot more to males than females, and that may be something endemic to the form. Really, we've given women plenty of opportunity to flock to super-hero comics with forty years of a Marvel-style super-hero that was really created when Stan Lee applied his extensive experience writing romance comics for girls to the super-hero genre. His formula highlights character development, emotional content, and soap-opera-style story lines. All of these elements are now virtually universal in today's super-hero comic, but it doesn't appear the readership is any more female today than it was in 1962.

If we're truly serious about getting women into the industry's readership in meaningful numbers, we need to explore the kinds of stories that truly interest women in mass numbers, whether or not we personally think those genres are worthy of the art form. Many of them — romance novels, for example — would probably never work in comic-book form, but there was once a thriving genre known as romance comics that I'd guess was killed more by the apathy of the creators than the readers.

And we need look no further than the Japanese industry to find plenty of very successful concepts aimed specifically at female readers. When you get the chance, check out the true diversity of the Japanese industry and appreciate that a lot of those kinds of stories could never get off the ground as original domestic products in this country, partly because our industry has such a narrow definition of what a comic book can be.

As I discussed a few issues back regarding kid readers, you and I certainly don't have the resources on our own to change the business and start reaching neglected readerships, whether they be kids or females. But the more of us who appreciate how self-imposed our industry's limits are, the better a chance we have of gradually working toward change.

In the meantime, don't worry about trying to make your stories all things to all readers, worry about making them the best they can be. And a big part of that will be a steady supply of interesting, exciting, real characters of both sexes.
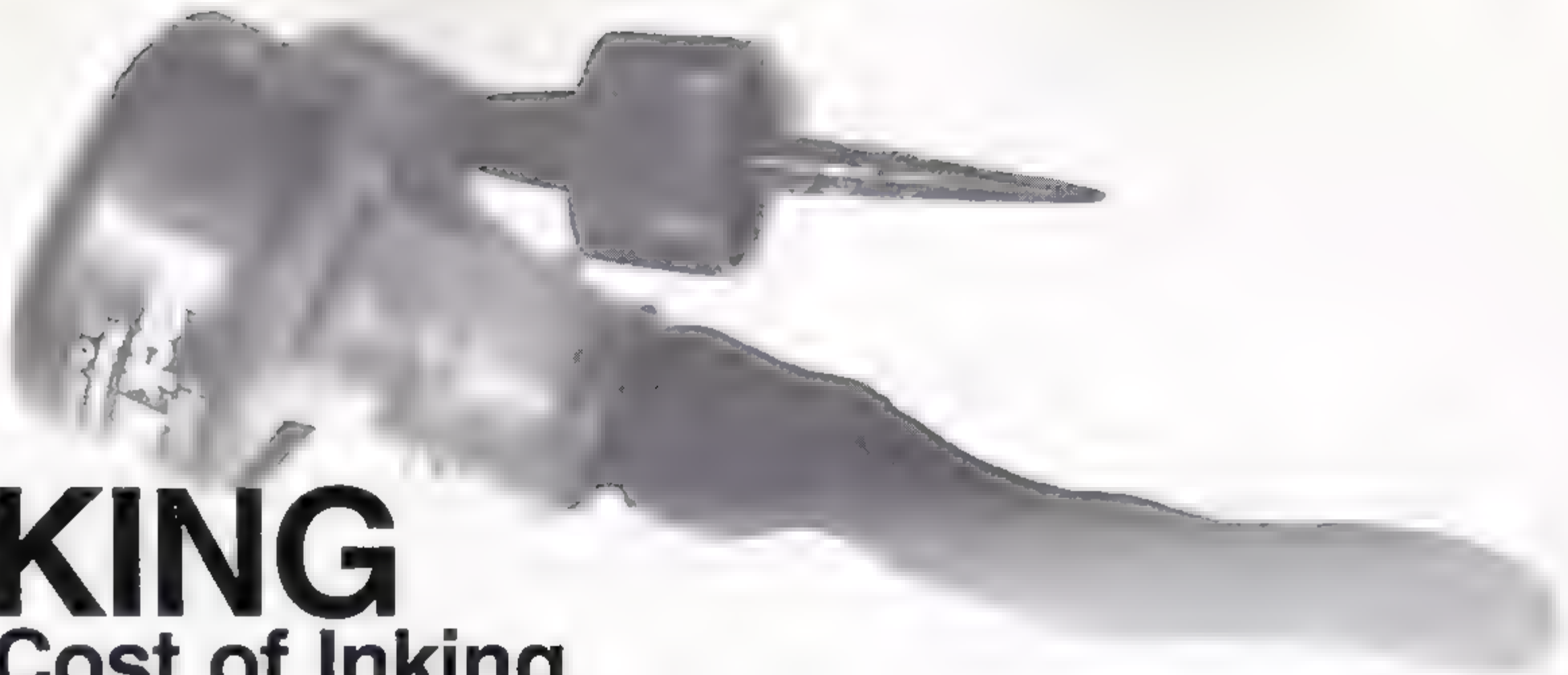
INKING
The Cost of Inking
by Chris Dreier

I want to be an inker; what kind of ink should I use? What kind of brushes do most inkers use? Should I get the most expensive, best brush available on the market? If I do, will it make my lines look better? What make should I pick up? Should I buy them by the dozen? Should I keep them hermetically sealed? Aw, who cares - I hear most inkers these days use markers, anyhow...

During its ongoing effort to bring enlightenment to emerging comic talent everywhere, *Sketch* receives a lot of questions just like these – in fact, *Sketch* receives *exactly* these questions! While inking technique is often discussed in these pages, it seems that many of you are still uncertain about what tools to pick up before jumping too far into the inkwell.

No problem! For those of you just getting started with your inking, I thought it might be a good idea to list some basic tools you'll need to have on your board, and roughly how much it will cost you for these necessities. Maybe I can steer you in the right direction and help you save some money in the process. And as you'll see, there's a use for any pennies I can save you.

There are, of course, tools and brands other than the ones I'll discuss here, but these are the ones I've found to give me the greatest service and versatility. These can be used by inkers of all skill levels, but are of particular interest as strong, basic workhorses for those of you just starting to enjoy the challenge and magic of inking. It's also important to tell you the prices that I have listed are rough averages of those I've rounded up lately through encounters in local art stores. Check around, you might get them a little higher or lower. Alrighty, let's get started.

Brushes

When I first started inking, I went to a convention in Chicago and talked to a professional inker. He was telling me that he used a real sable blend brush, each costing him about $24.00. I couldn't afford that much back then. So I ran into a brush made by the same company as the $24.00 one. I started with the Winsor & Newton Sceptre Gold Series 101 sable/synthetic blend and I used sizes 0 -1. These brushes run about $5.00 each and they work just fine if you are inking on a budget The only thing that I recommend is that you keep the brushes clean. Having dried ink in the base of the stalk will shorten the life span of the brush – and if you're not tidy, it's better to teach yourself some brush hygiene at the cost of a couple $5.00, not $25.00 dollar items – unless you're the type that really has to learn the hard way. It's a good thing if you can make a $5.00 brush last six to seven months, or even a few years.

Today I use Winsor & Newton Series 7 finest sable, size 1. It is a bit pricey at $20.00 each, but it's a great brush. I like to pick the stray hairs from it before I start inking. I found that if I don't the stray ones tend to bend into the rest, causing the entire brush to split. This "stray hair" tip applies to the cheaper brushes as well. Oh yeah, one more thing: when you're at the art store, ask for some water and dip each brush you want to buy into it. This will give you a chance to check the shape of the tip. If the tip doesn't look like a sharp point at all angles - and the hairs don't snap back into its shape after gently tapping it down on the back of your hand or some paper – *don't buy it*. Find one that works.
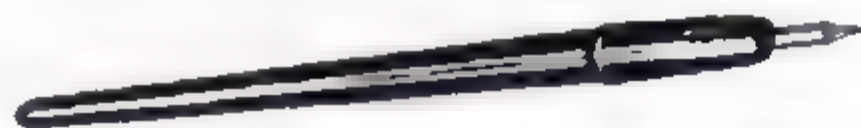
Crow quills and nibs

Lots of newbies are so use to seeing pros at cons use a variety of pens and markers to bat out great con drawings, they're sometimes under the impression that's what everyone uses on the actual comic pages. Some do, but most real hands use the crow quill – a nib (point) that fits into a handle, and is dipped in ink to "charge". There's a real variety of nibs out there, but you'll find you only need a couple to do some beautiful work. I have two nibs that I use, the Hunt 107 and Flexible. The Hunt 107 is good for nearly everything. I use the crow quill for texture; rocks, wood, cracks in glass or on concrete. Once you get good with it the nib is great for sharp, clean feathering. The flexible nib is good for feathering also. That's the main reason I have one. The nibs are about $0.25 to $0.75, and the handles are roughly $1.50 to $2.00.
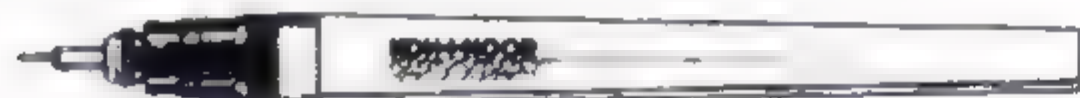
Pens

I use Rotring Rapidoliner pens. These are the pens that use cartridges I like these for two reasons: 1) They are the easiest pens to use. With others you have to draw ink into them, and when you're done rinse and clean them out. I don't have time for that (actually I'm just *very* lazy). 2) The ink the pen puts down is good and dark, and stays that way after drying. The only problem with these pens is the cost. A complete pen with one cartridge will run you about $15.00 to $20.00, and one refill cartridge is $9.00. They do, however,

last at least six months or more.

There are a lot of markers – or "disposable technical pens" – currently on the market. I do on occasion use Micron pens. I prefer the smaller sizes of this pen like somewhere around .005. It works great on tiny faces or fine details, but be careful. It can erase away with pencil lines when you're cleaning up your page. Keep that in mind, as you might not notice such things before sliding the pages into that shipping box. Microns will run you about $3.00 each, and are readily available.

French Curves

I bought my first set when I got an assignment from Now Comics (now defunct) to ink *The New Adventures of Speed Racer*. With this title I knew there was going to be a lot of cars. You need the french curves to match the smooth curves and arcs that a penciller puts down when doing precise vehicles, machinery, or well-drafted transforming mecha! Just check out that "Seeing the Scene" article way back in Sketch # 3 to give you some idea of the work that can go into delineating a DeLorean.

If I didn't have these tools the cars would have had a freehand look. Maybe that's your style, but some books require that clean look. Sometimes you can use the french curves to create an arc on a figure that you would have a hard time keeping your hand steady for. One thing that is important is that you find the french curves that have an *inking edge*. This is important - it means that the ink from your pen won't bleed up under the plastic edge. I don't have to tell you what a nightmare that can be – all those smooth arches and curves suddenly turning into a muddled smear. Difficult and time-consuming to correct, so watch out! There are a number of sets available, but you can get away with a decent set of these for about $8.00.

Straight edge

This can be anything really, just as long as it's raised from the table. Most inkers use a combination of rulers and triangles. I use a triangle with an *inking edge*. If you have a favorite ruler, great – but I'll bet yours sits flat on the table? Well, a fast and easy trick to convert it into an inker-friendly implement is to just tape some pennies to the bottom. You can make this do with a regular triangle as well as your ruler, natch. You might want to get a few different triangles; some small ones for tight detail shots of mechanics, buildings, and the like, and maybe a large one for page edges and panel borders. Depending on the size of the triangle you want you can get them from $4.00 to $12.00.
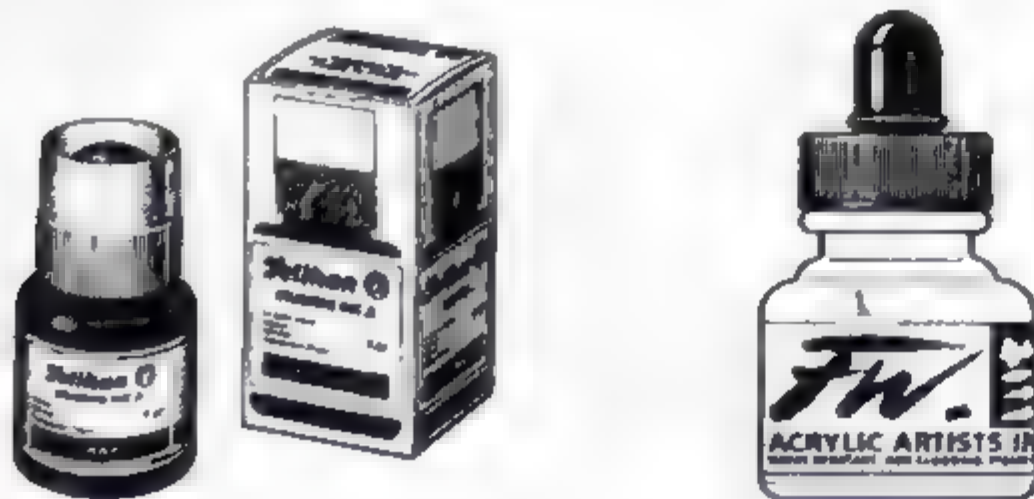
Inks and correction fluid

Some inks are watery. You want stay away from them; watery inks take more applications to cover large black areas because you might have to put down two or three coats to get a decent black (instead of a splotched or uneven grey) line or area. More ink can cause "pooling" – obviously not a good thing, as this takes additional drying time, allows a greater risk of you running your hand through it because it's still wet, and can cause your board to buckle or pit. As a pro, the last thing you want is a page of finished inks that resembles a ten-year-old's black-and-white watercolor experiment. Also, when you erase you run the risk that watery inks will smear or "come up," necessitating touch-up work. This can be *brutal*, especially if you're erasing and cleaning up your pages on a tight deadline, or just before making it to FedEx that evening.

It's best to find a 'heavier' ink. I use Rapidograph Ultradraw 3085-F. It covers pretty evenly, and stays nice and dark when dry. There might be better ink out there, but I haven't found it yet. It comes in a small bottle that costs about $4.00. You'll need to get something to put the ink into so your brush or nib can dip into it. If you're not yet a practiced hand at "the dip, it helps if you can see the ink level. I use an old Pelikan ink bottle. The opening is large enough for any brush or nib.

To correct any mistakes or to add effects like stars or snow, I use Process White, or Pro White. It takes a bit of care; if you don't stir it every time you use it it will dry up and be like putty. Water can be added to thin it out from time to time. You'll also want to have a brush set aside just for correction and white effects. If you grab a brush that you had used for inking the white will turn gray, and that doesn't help your cause. Don't waste your time trying to get double duty out of a brush – your brush should only serve one master, the empire of ink or the kingdom of correction fluid. A bottle of Process White will set you back about $4.00. If you take good care of this and keep stirring it every time it's opened it could literally last years (unless you really make a *lot* of mistakes – or specialize in books just filled with stars and snow).

There are more tools of importance you'll want to invest in as soon as possible after these – you'll need some good ellipse guides, a T-square, and a compass, just to name a few. And I'm assuming you already have good lighting, a comfortable drafting table, and a practical work area. But you'll need the tools I listed to see if inking is for you, unless you know a real prince that will allow you to borrow their tools – a real rarity. You'll find most inkers don't lend out their tools, and after you do it a while, you'll know why!

Let's review. To start on your way to being an inking professional you'll probably need to initially drop about $67.00. That's with the cheaper brush. Keep in mind that there are other types of pens and brushes that are cheaper - but look out for poor quality. There is nothing worse than knowing what you want your ink work to look like, but the brush or pen just won't produce the line you need it to. As you progress you'll experiment with other tools, and find you'll use some more or less as you develop your technique. But for now, get to work – and good luck!

Faster Than the Speed of Ink

Okay, you're good – but are you fast? You better be in the comics business.

Unless you're on the short list of superstars that fans and editors will patiently wait years for the next installment of *SquirrelMan* for. The speed you can turn around jobs is your second best asset, after quality of your inks, to keep the editors calling. Even if you're still breaking into the business, chances are you're still working another full time job and have to make the most of that precious inking time, so herein are some of the tips I've learned along the way to help you keep brushing on the black stuff as fast as possible.

Never sacrifice quality! Let's put that right up front. I'm not talking about doing hack jobs, or rushing to meet impossible deadlines by changing all the characters into silhouettes! I've heard from some inkers who were begged by editors to "just finish it!...I need the pages!" And then when forced to rush the job, found out later there were complaints about the pages not being up to the usual standards. Well you can't have it both ways, and in those instances clear communication with the editor is best to find out just how many shortcuts are okay. The thing about saving deadlines is that in the short fix the pages get to the colorist on time, but in the long haul your work is printed and then it's out there forever! So make sure when you accept the work you have the proper time to do a decent job of it.

Let's start out by eyeballing your studio set-up. You need a place to work where you can leave all your stuff out in easy reach so you can basically just sit down, pop the cap off your ink, and start brushing. Nothing will keep you away from working more than if you have to "unpack" all your stuff from a box under the bed and set it up to work. You may have to talk to parents, spouses, or significant others, so they understand you're not just being a slob (even if you usually are!).

It doesn't have to look like a pigsty. In fact, if it does this is a time waster, not a time saver, 'cuz then you can't find anything! But have your favorite pens, brushes and tools sitting right where you need them. Do a little organization so you can always grab that 20-degree ellipse guide when you want it without sorting through your entire collection of templates. Simplify your setup so that you have your most used tools out and ready, and the rest of your occasional tools within easy reach. I've got several file cabinets and try to have them organized with different drawers for reference, past jobs, and business related things like correspondence, contracts, and bills. And always with the most frequently used things within closest reach. Get plenty of file folders you can clearly label and find things. You'll save loads of time by not wasting it searching for the reference you need from that last issue of *SquirrelMan* where he fought the Goo From Beyond!

Invest in some shelves and stands to put around your drawing board so everything isn't spread around on the floor. You can make shelves with blocks and flat boards, and loads of plastic contraptions are available at cheap prices. This will help organize your reference books, comics, and toys and action figures you use for models and—Hey! Put down that Dino-bot and pay attention!

This might be a good time to mention that you should keep distractions to a minimum. It's probably not the best idea to have your Playstation2 hooked up within easy reach of your drawing table. I have the TV on a lot, but I try to find programs that I can just listen to like talk shows and Discovery channel stuff. Save the special effects movies and animation for when the deadline's over. Music is the best, because you can keep your head down and keep working. If you added up all the times you glance up to look at the TV throughout the day, you probably could have inked another page! Like to talk on the phone? Invest in a good headset, so you can keep scratching down those pen lines while you gab about the latest gossip on who got the job you wanted and what a crappy inker he is!

A penciler once said to me that he draws a page a day, and since he has to start from scratch, he would suppose I could ink much more than that since I start with a pencilled page. Well I can, because I'm good. But it's not an apples to apples comparison. We don't get the luxury of using a pencil for one thing. Ink is wet and it smears, and whiteout has to dry, and pages have to be erased, brushes have to be washed out, etc., etc.

Most of all, wet ink really slows you down! The best way to get around wet ink is to work on two to three pages at the same time. This way you can swap a wet page for a dry page as soon as you've run out of room to lay your hand down. It also helps to

DAN DAVIS '00

break up the monotony of inking fourteen panels in a row of SquirrelMan talking to his girlfriend (yes, sometimes it can get boring inking comics! –but just for a little bit). You can jump over to the page where he's fighting the giant squid robot, and when that's wet, hop back to SQ-Man and Natilda Shell ("nut"-tilda — get it?) smooching on the couch.

Need 'em to dry even faster? Have a small fan setting on the floor and prop your page up to increase your air-dry power. This helps too when the pages are all done and you need to get to erasing them in a hurry because the Airborne truck is due any second. Sometimes they look okay, but when you start erasing they smudge from not being thoroughly dry under the surface, and then you spend even more time whiting out. So if they can't sit overnight, a fan can help cure the ink out of there. Some people use a hair dryer but then you've got to hold that, so I like a fan.

I used to dip my pen too far into my ink bottle sometimes and have to stop and wash it all up, but then I hit onto this little trick. Keep a couple of bottles taped down right on your drawing board (so you aren't reaching over to the side three thousand times a day), and only fill those bottles up with enough ink so that if you just tap your pen or brush on the bottom of the bottle you've got the perfect amount to ink with. I keep three containers on my drawing board that are actually 35mm film vials. They seal up great, and keep ink fresh and are disposable and free! One vial for pen ink that I might thin a little with water to keep it flowing off the pen. One for brush ink that I might leave the cap off and let thicken up a bit to get it even blacker. And one for a little water that I mix into my whiteout for a nice consistency doing corrections.

If you're really producing a lot and need some help, enlist a friend to help fill in the black areas. You ink everything around them and put in an "x" so they know exactly where to black in an area. If they don't have a lot of brush talent, try some of the permanent markers that are available. As long as it photographs black you'll be okay. I wonder how many wives and girlfriends of inkers have been enlisted into this time-honored army? Be sure to be the last one to look your pages over and make sure no spots were missed.

With modern coloring and Photoshop techniques there are a few areas that can be done easier on the computer now than the way inkers have done them in the past. I just did a night scene on *Green Lantern* where I blacked in the sky and put in stars with whiteout (as were my instructions). When I got to see the finished book I saw the sky was in color (a dark blue) and the stars had been knocked out by the Photoshop artist. It looked great, but you know what I thought of the first thing? You bet! "Why the heck did I waste my time doing that?" The next time this comes up I'll be communicating more with my editor, or perhaps just give the colorist a call and save myself some sweat.

Zipatones (the gray dot patterns that are cut around with an X-acto knife and stuck onto the art to make different shades) that inkers use may be a thing of the past as well. I hope so, as I hate putting them on, even though I love the effects. Besides, for some reason it always came out of the inker's pocket to buy the sheets, and the companies and pencilers were just fine with that little arrangement! Well no more. Now those patterns can easily be duplicated in Photoshop, and it's no more work than putting down any other color. In fact the colorist might like putting them in even better, since they sometimes don't scan so well when putting the line art into the computer.

Can you afford a copier? I don't know how I ever got along without one. They're pretty reasonable now compared to the time when I first started inking. Now that I have one, the whole family uses it. I should start charging a dime a throw—I'd be rich. But it has saved me loads of time from running to the copy shop. The saved time and gas and just plain convenience really adds up, and I'm sure it's paid for itself many times over. Always copy your final inks before mailing. If the job is lost they can print from your copies, and it could save you a paycheck!

Once the job is finished I know right where to grab my shipping supplies, boxes, and labels, and I can look up the addresses in my rolodex or filing cabinet. Another trick is to save the package the goods came in, and you've got the correct size and address right there. Of course FedEx and Airborne are on my speed dialer too! Never waste a second!

Organization, communication, and a little discipline will help shave off wasted time when you ink.

Remember. . there's good, there's fast, and then there's good and fast!
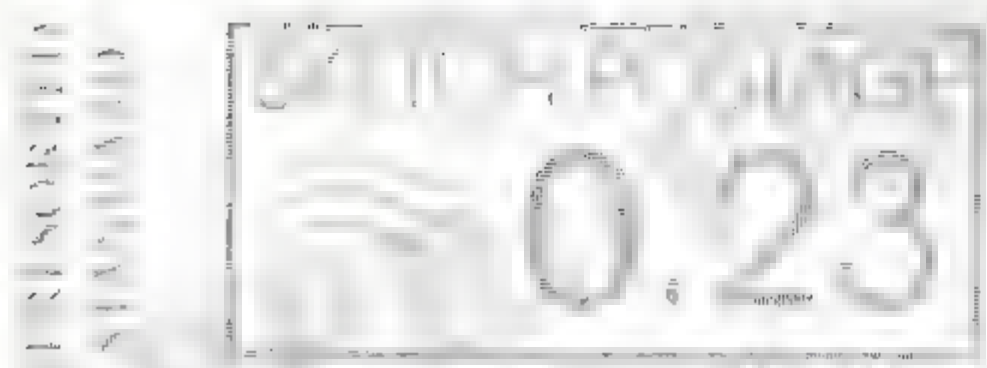
Letters Forum

Greetings!

I was wondering what the Sketch staff thinks of my current attempt at submitting samples to companies for a potential writer's position.

First I try to learn a little about the company (so I know what type of material to send) that I'm submitting too, usually by reviewing the company's website. I then cook up two separate, hopefully quality single issue story proposals using Marvel's current guide for writer's submissions: title, springboard, synopsis, and sample full script trying to keep the whole proposal no longer than 3 printed pages. I also make sure all of my contact information is on each page (usually printed on the back). I include a self-addressed, self-stamped envelope for response.

I also include what I hope is a humorous check-off sheet for the reviewer to use if they want. A sample of this sheet is as follows.
Springboard: (check most applicable answer)
- I couldn't wait to read more!
  The suspense is KILLING me!
- Interesting. It made me want to see more, but not spend my money on it. Work on it.
- Needs improvement.
- Didn't I see this drivel in a personal ad?

Finally, I include a cover letter introducing myself and my goals in the comic industry. Because I have yet to be published in the comics industry I make sure to point out that I have had seven (and counting) role-playing scenarios published for Wizards of the Coast for their Dungeons and Dragons gaming system. I also try to point out the similarities between the scenarios and comics.

Is there any comments or advice the staff at Sketch could provide that may help me in my endeavor? Thanks,

Jim Roberts

Hi Jim,

You have a decent start going on your approach to submissions. If I have one major suggestion, it would be to try and get to meet the editors and creators face-to-face, and as often as possible.

Your cover letter is fine, but remember that you're trying to break into an industry where everybody has a story to tell. Most publishers may say that they carefully consider every submission, but this can often be far from the truth. The best way to get people to notice your story is if you know somebody. Even if you're the next Stephen King, the best way to get an editor to actually look at your submission is having them know the face or voice behind the words.

Get to know the people who look at these submissions. Follow their work and start sending letters expressing your opinion as a fan. Find out what they respond to, whether it's a yes man or the honest truth. Either way, you've opened a line of communication that will be helpful in tailoring your submission for consideration.

Make an effort to go to conventions and have a face to face conversation with these people as well as many other professionals as you can. Don't try to be their best friend, they can see through that, and don't throw a script in their face, they will throw it right back at you. Be yourself, and don't force anything. If they like you, they like you. If not, there are other pros to talk to and learn from, move around the tables.

Try to make as many connections as you can with professionals friends. You'll never know whom they know. They might be able to help in the sense of being a friend of a friend.

It's good that you are using the Marvel guidelines in drafting your submission, while keeping it short and including contact information everywhere. Just remember that everyone sending submissions to Marvel is using these same guidelines. Your submission probably looks identical to others, so try to make your submission stand out while still remaining in the guidelines.

It's good to mention your previous work. Just be careful how you do it. Don't try to make a big deal about it, as you may not get the reaction you hoped for. Just state what you have done and let them decide on its strengths.

If you present yourself professionally, your use of humor is a good idea. It can show that you take your work seriously, but not too seriously - and that you can work with a team. You need to be able to roll with any personal disappointment you may have with your work.

I hope that was of some use to you Jim.
Thanks for writing,
M²

Jim:

If you're looking for guidelines in getting your and your work noticed in a professional manner you'll be glad you stopped to Sketch!

Two words: Beau Smith! His name thunders, rolls, and reverberates across all known and unknown comic book country, from the ponderosas of the pros to the ranches of the retailers and over the herds of comic book fans. He's comics' Last Real Man, and also the prince of self-promotion, and you should always read his columns within our pages. Beau has sold himself and his writing, other creators, projects, pitches, and ideas more than many can count (and due to the nature of his position and numerous non-disclosure contracts over the years, more than many will ever know or give him credit for). He's also been a friendly ear and helpful, callused-knuckled hand to many a fan. Beau's written a number of cool comics during his years, Jim, so as a writer you'll find his columns particularly practical - and if you dare doubt their effectiveness, Beau's long list of impressive and time-spanning credits should concrete your confidence. Beau was vice-president of sales and marketing at Eclipse Comics before moving on to the highly sought-after position of Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Image Comics, representing all six of the Image studios at the height of their boom years. After that he became the VP of sales and marketing for none other than Todd McFarlane, helping Spawn's progress through the bloody alleyways of both McFarlane Productions and McFarlane Toys. Beau's now working his marketing miracles as VP of Sales and Marketing for Ted Adam's Idea and Design Works, opening new vistas for his comic boots to tread. This bar-busting, bone-bashing brawler is timber wolf tough and coyote cunning - but he loves comics! A specialist in the comic marketing field, bottom of the boot is that Sketch is sincerely proud to have him as a regular columnist.

Too tough an approach for you? How about some smooth info and advice from super-scribe Chuck Dixon? (Incidentally, Chuck was a collaborator with Beau on the then trend setting Black Terror from Eclipse.) This is a guy with the talent and ideas to burn out a number of word processors, coupled with the professionalism and work ethics it takes to keep him an in-demand industry perennial. Check out Chuck's "How to Talk to an Editor" in Sketch # 12.

And if you need even more tips on submissions and dealing with pros, you'll be interested in Mr. Tom Bierbaum's civil yet sharp "Getting along with Your Editor," back in Sketch #6.

Keep Sketching, Jim - we always bring you the best behind-the-bristol tips, by some of the most respected and experienced creators from the comics industry.
F

Hello,

I've grown used to the traditional 10" x 15" but feel more comfortable inking with the Strathmore smooth boards. My question is this: The drawing area on the Strathamore boards is 9" x 13 ¾", right? That's the actual copy area? If so, do both the 10 x 15 and the 9 x 13 3/4 shrinks down to the same size?

Thanks for your time. I'm sure this was a rather annoying question.

Tim

Hi Tim,

It depends on how you want to use the 9" x 13 ¾" full trim border. It merely serves as a guideline, and not a rule. You may decide just to draw within the full trim border, but you wouldn't be utilizing the decent size portion of your board. I use the full trim border as a tool to help me line up some panels and give me an idea of the safe area for my word balloons. As for the area I draw in, I use the 10"x15" border. You can even choose to ignore the full trim border.

All the borders are in the same proportions, meaning that they all can be shrunk down to the same size. If you feel "big" enough, you can try our new Oversized Art Boards (made with Strathmore). The image area on these 14" by 22" inch boards is 12" x 19". They were specially designed for Liberty Meadows' artist Frank Cho.
Thanks Tim,
M²

Hiya Blueliners,

Do you guys know of any other schools besides the Kubert school that has courses on sequential art? Thanks,

Dan Iamerius

Hey Dan,

Here's another - the Savannah College of Art and Design offers a BA, BFA, MA, and MFA in the field of sequential art. Check out http //www.scad.edu/seqa/ for more information.
Thanks,
M²

PAT QUINN'S
PERSPECTIVE

What?... More Perspective?!
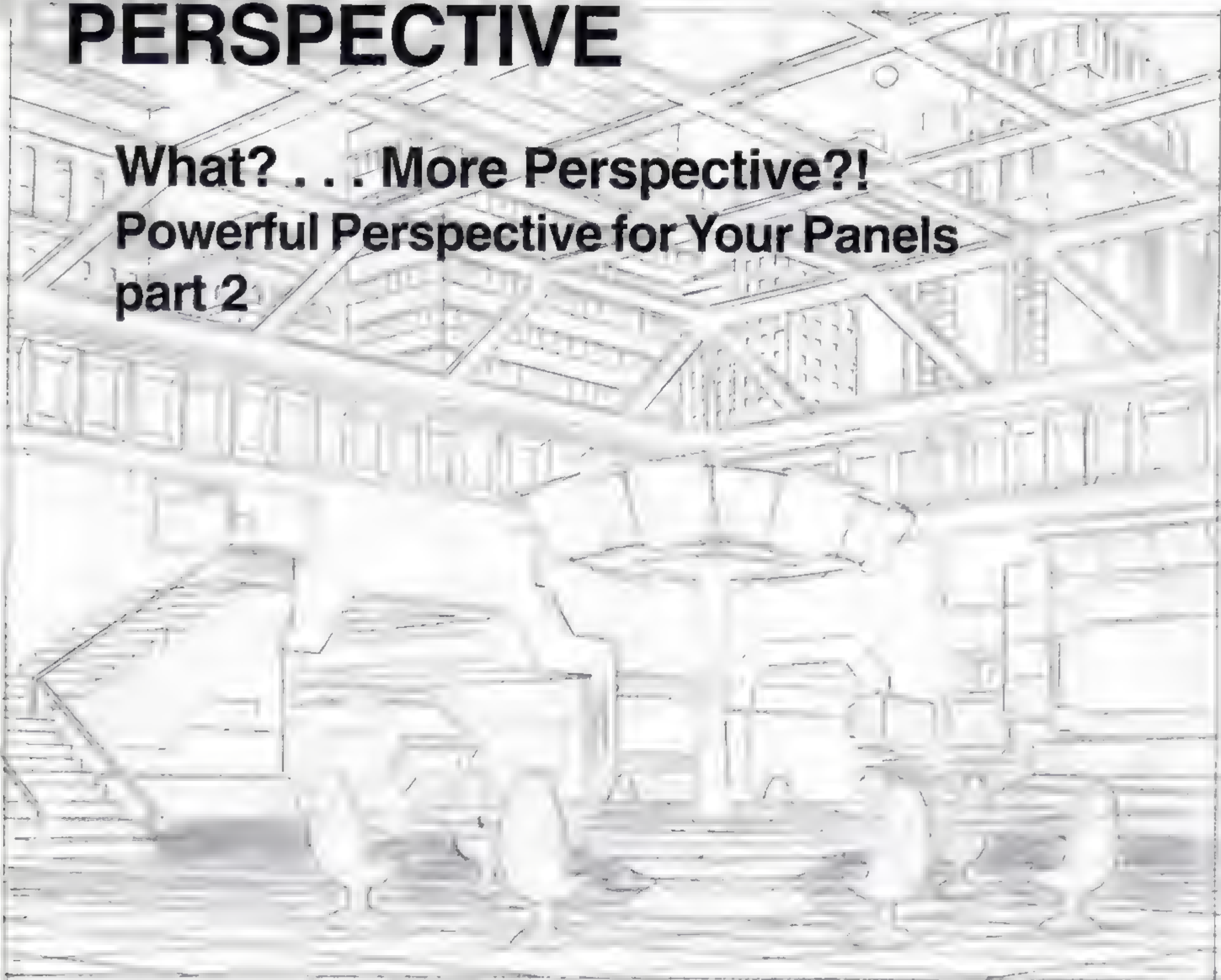## Powerful Perspective for Your Panels
part 2

Figure 1

That's right gang; I'm back with a few more things to say about perspective [To see what Pat had to say about perspective his first time out, take your T-square and read Sketch # 15's "Applying Perspective to your Storytelling"]. With this particular assignment, Flint "Slave Driver" Henry and I decided to try and tackle a few different kinds of perspective problems as you would see them in a typical comic book panel.

Fig 1 What we have is a typical super-hero headquarters in the middle of a city, presenting us with a few different problems to solve. Let's start by just doing some simple observation of the drawing, and getting our brains ready for what comes next.

We are looking at an interior space with a foreground, middle ground, and background...the ceiling appears to be a large skylight, as we can see the city...there is a staircase...there is a round table in the room...anything else? What about the perspective? Is this one-Point, two-Point, or three-Point perspective?

If you raised your hand and said, "Two-point!" you are correct.

Still not sure? Well, take a look and see if all the lines seem to be converging to one point...no? Okay, then that rules out one-point. Are the vertical (up and down) lines converging to single point...no? Then, that rules out three-point. If you look carefully, you will notice that some lines converge to a point on the far right, while others converge to a point on the far left. Thus we have a two-point perspective drawing.

Now that we've determined what kind of shot this is, let's do some reverse engineering, and take some of the different pieces of this illustration and see how they were drawn.
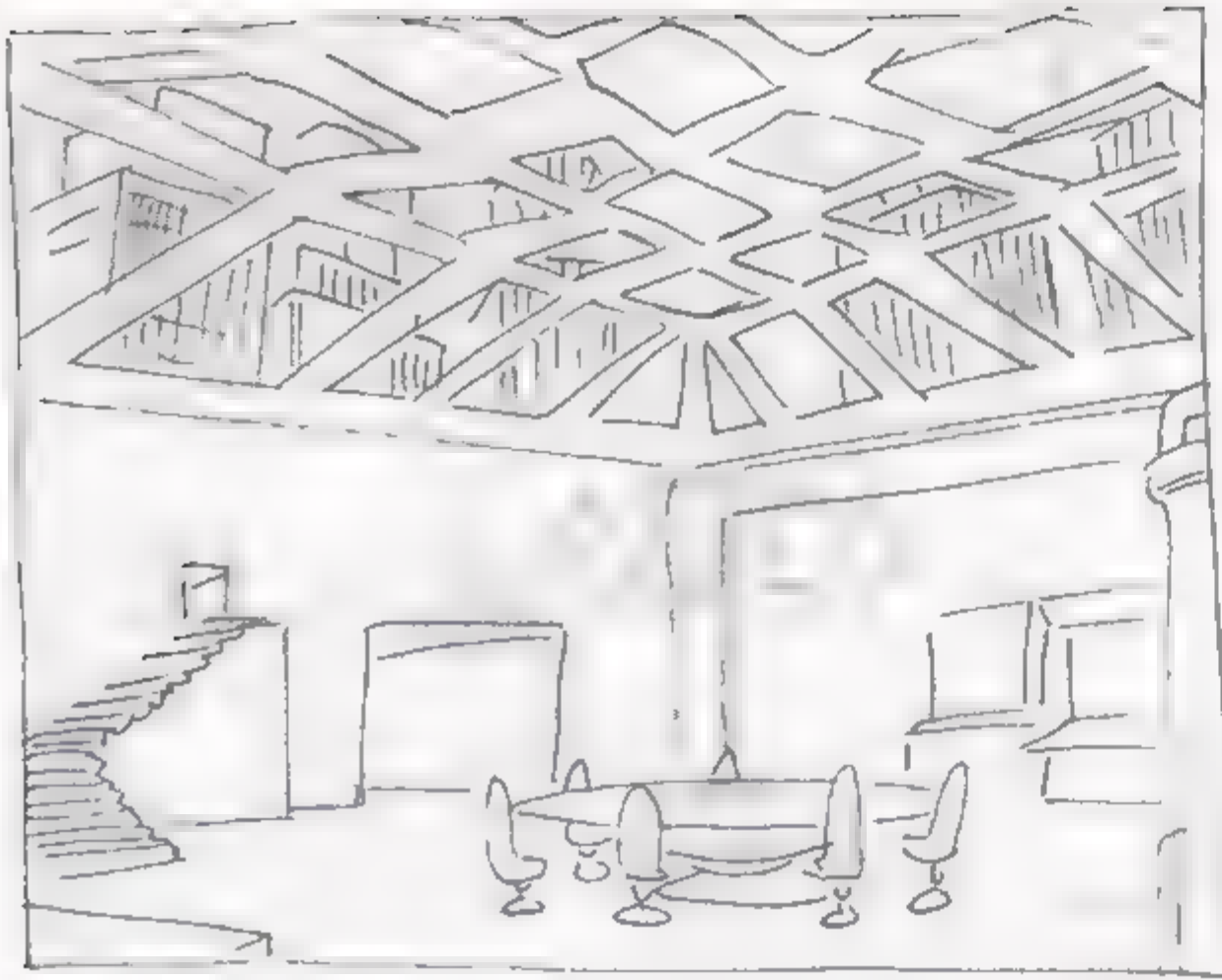
Figure 2

When I do drawings like this I usually do a rough drawing, "eye-balling" the perspective just to get an idea of how it will work and where all the elements will be in the panel (Fig 2). Then I determine where my horizon line and vanishing points will fall. That's just me...you may want to set up your horizon line and vanishing points first, before doing any drawing. Keep in mind, this is the way I approach things – you might want to follow these steps as you get started, but you're sure to develop your own methods and shortcuts as you solve your own perspective problems over the course of time.

Figure 3

In Fig 3 we have the panel border and the horizon line (represented with the broken line). Notice that the horizon line is relatively low on the picture plane. By having the horizon line low, we see more of what is above the horizon. The vanishing points are far outside the picture plane, which is fine.

Figure 4

You can see that I've drawn a few perspective lines in Fig 4 just to indicate the far walls of the room, which helps give us some idea of the space. Underneath the picture plane there is another line that runs parallel to our horizon line. Along that line I've made marks at three-inch increments. Even though you can't see it in the diagram, that line extends way, way, waaaaay beyond what is shown. It's that line that will help us draw the grid pattern on the floor.
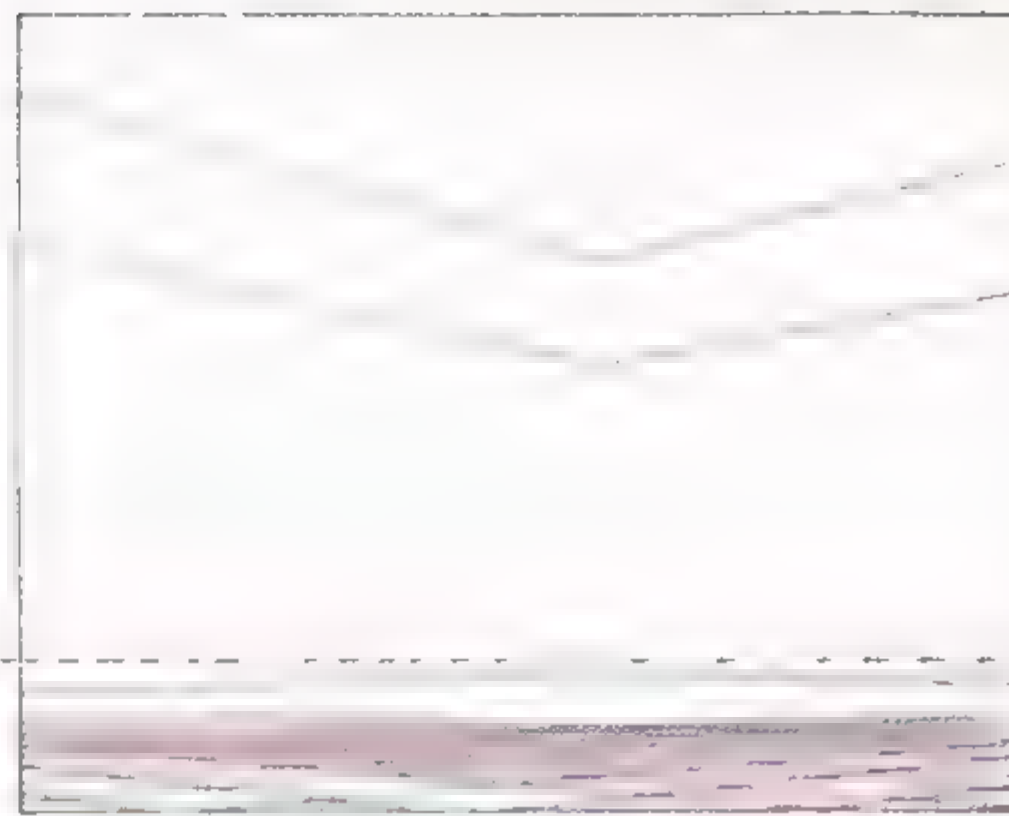
Figure 5

From the vanishing point on the left, I draw a line to one of the points along that line that we just talked about. I repeat this step with the vanishing point on the right. The result is a grid, in perspective, on the floor of our room (Fig 5).

Notice how the squares of the grid are wider at the bottom of the picture plane, and how they become more narrow and "squished" as they approach the horizon line. This is supposed to happen. What you want to watch out for is your grid becoming so tight near the horizon line that it becomes a big dark area. If you think this may happen, I suggest using some artistic license and leaving the grid incomplete as it moves deeper into the background. You've established the grid in the foreground, so your readers' minds will understand that the pattern goes all the way back.

Figure 6

With Fig 6 I've drawn in all the perspective lines that are used in this drawing. Since we aren't examining a Three-Point drawing I left out the vertical lines, as they are perpendicular to the horizon line (straight up and down at 90 degrees, no tilting lines).

That's the basic two-point overview of this drawing. Now let's look at some specific elements of the drawing.

The Staircase

Over on the left-hand side of the room drawing we have a staircase. This presents us with the issue of *elevated vanishing points.* The first thing I want to do is establish the placement of my staircase, making sure to keep it in perspective. To do this I set up two rectangles using the same vanishing points I used to construct the rest of the room. Since I have a turn in the staircase I use long rectangles, so I can have a flat area at the beginning and middle of the staircase (Fig 7).
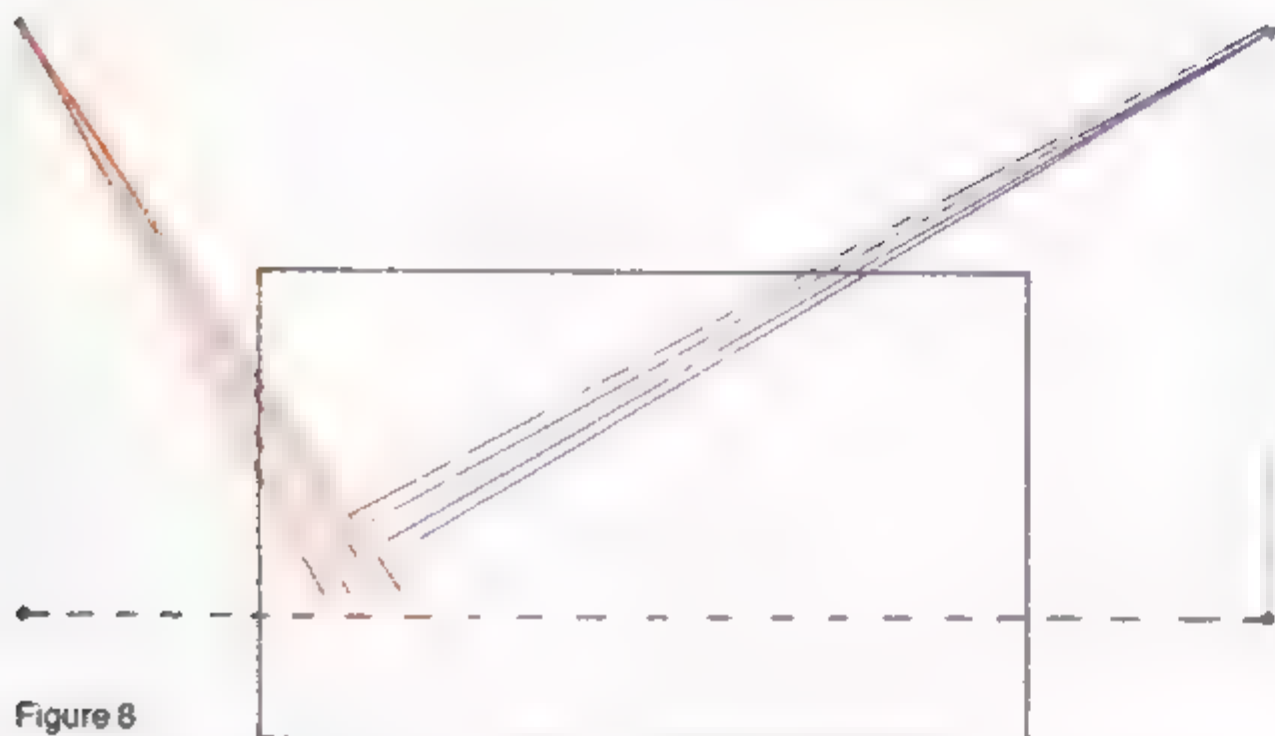
Figure 8

Figure 11 A   Figure 11 B

Figure 11 C   Figure 11 D
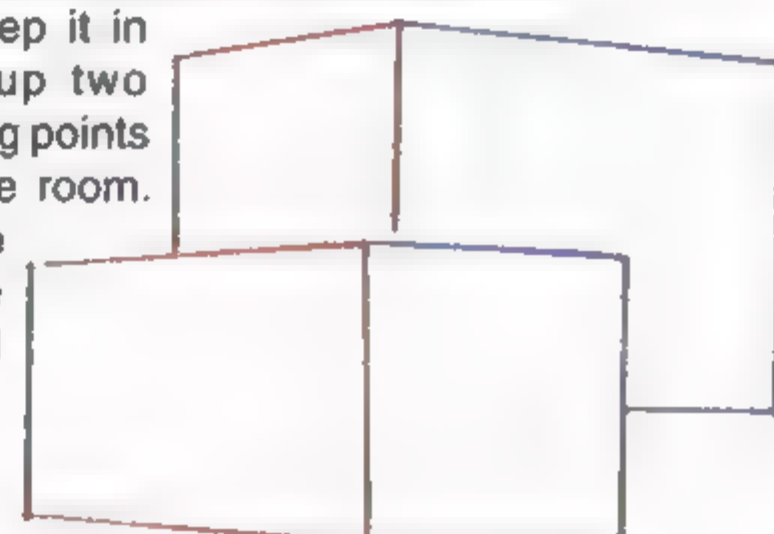
My next step is to cut angles into these rectangles so I have a slope to the staircase. This is where the *elevated vanishing points* come in. We already have two vanishing points established for this room, right? From those vanishing points, I draw lines up and mark two more points – those new points are *at the same height*. Having our new vertical vanishing points at the same height insures that the stairs will have the same slope in perspective (Fig.8).

Let's look at Figs 11 A–D. In Fig.11A, we see one of the rectangles has already been cut by the purple sloping lines, and the platform at the top is corresponding to the left and right vanishing points. From the corner of the platform I've drawn a small vertical line down to where it meets one of the purple sloping lines. Next I use the right vanishing point to draw a line from the bottom of the black vertical line, moving left, to the other purple sloping line (Fig.11B). This represents the side of the first step. I use the left vanishing point to draw a line to the far left purple sloping line (Fig.11C). This is the end of the first step and the top of the next step. With Fig.11D the process starts over.
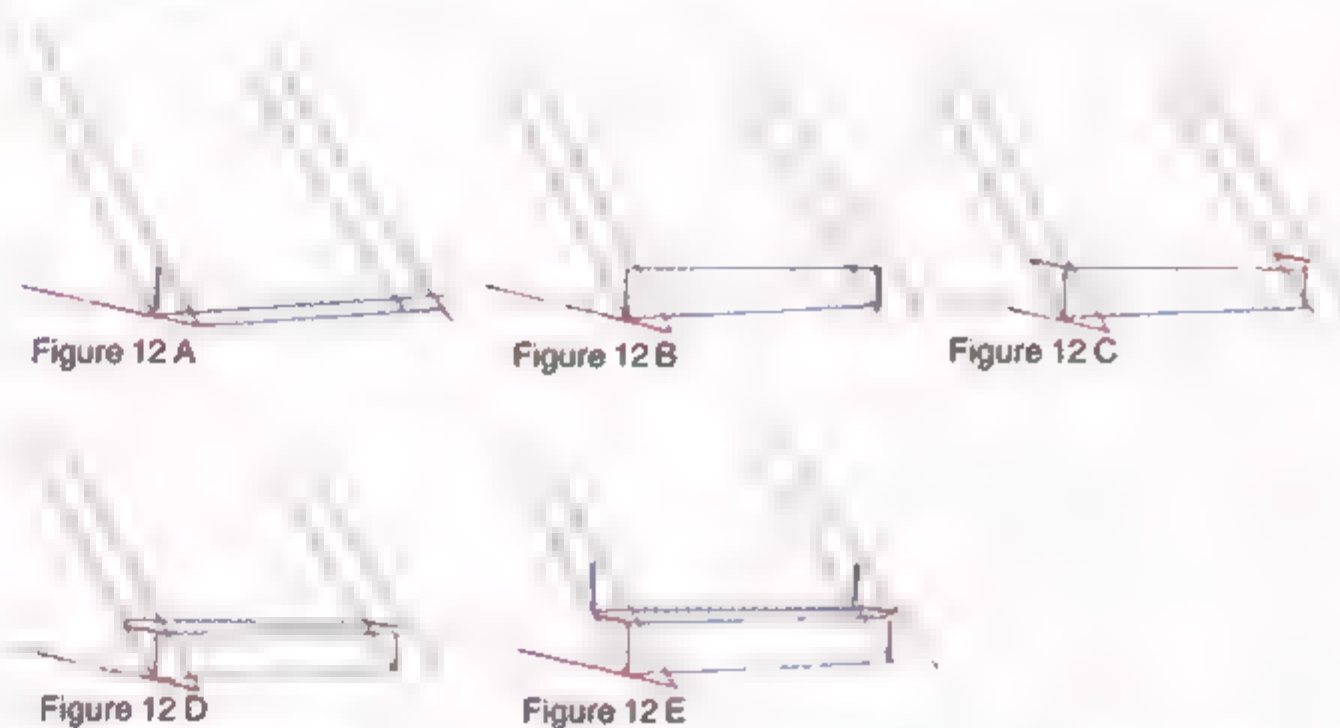
Figure 9

Figure 12 A   Figure 12 B   Figure 12 C

Figure 12 D   Figure 12 E

Try and think of a rectangle as two squares (or cubes) put together. When we draw our sloping lines from the vertical vanishing points, we are (ideally) cutting one of those squares in half (Fig 9). This will give us the flat platform sections at the beginning and middle of the staircase (Fig.10).

I use the same process for the lower part of the staircase in Figs.12A-E.

Your resulting picture should look something like Fig.13.

Figure 10

So why am I drawing two sets of lines on each side of the staircase? Well, I'll tell you...I use those lines as a guide to help keep each step of the staircase the same size.
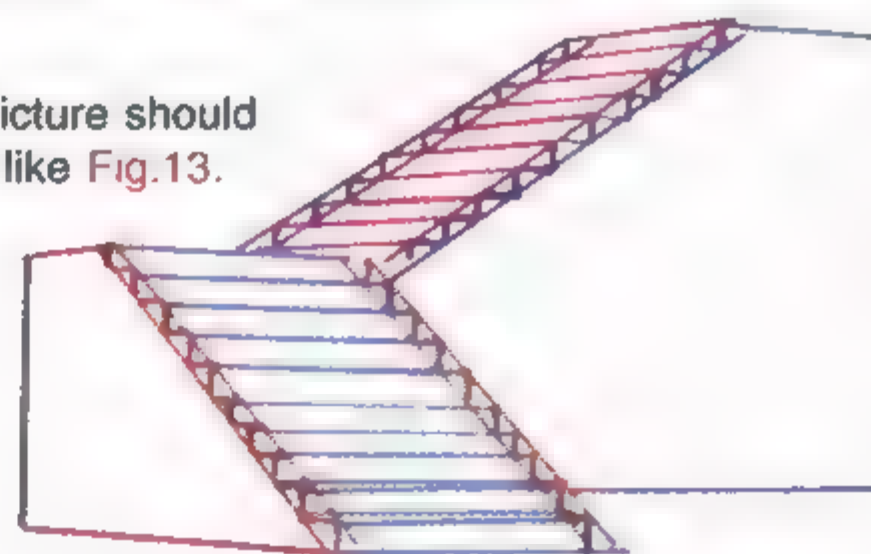
Here's a question for you: What do you think happens when those elevated vanishing points are *not* at the same height? This causes the two sets of steps in your staircase to be at different angles or slopes (Fig.14). This is not necessarily a problem if you intended it, or if the décor of your drawing requires it. Just something else to keep in mind.
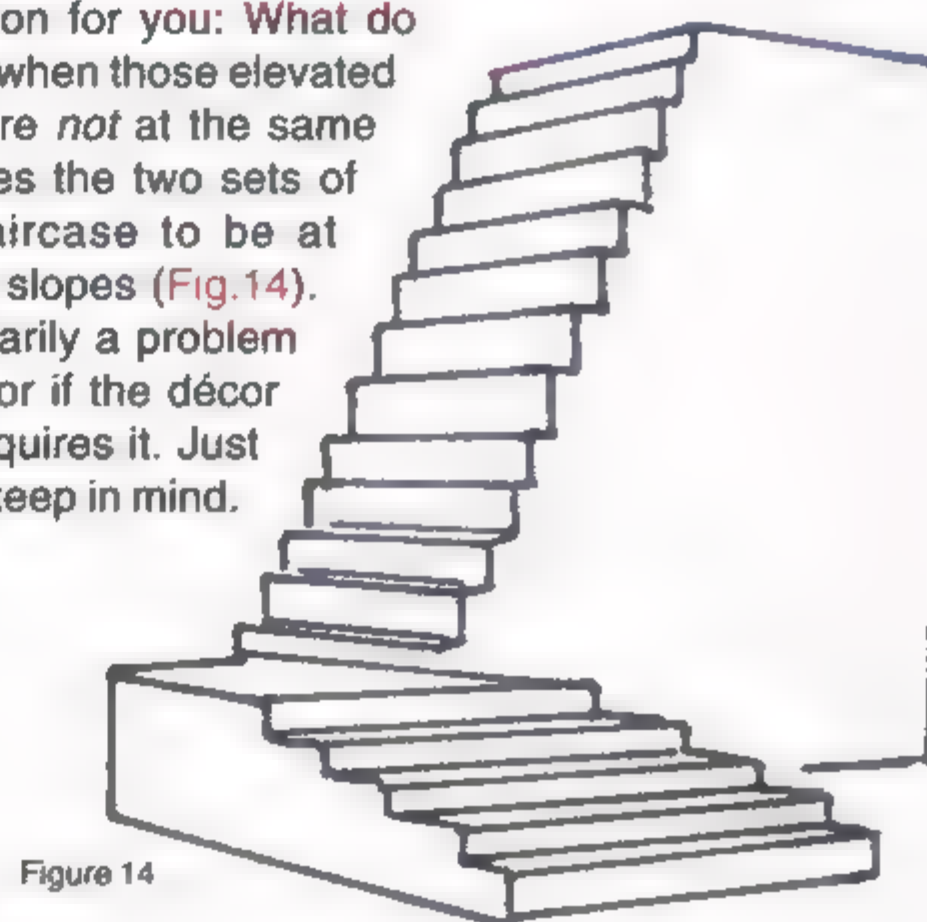
Moving on...

Figure 14

Ellipses – Circles in Perspective

Huh? Circles don't have any flat sides, or corners? How do you put a circle in perspective you ask? You put a circle in perspective by drawing a square in perspective!

What?!

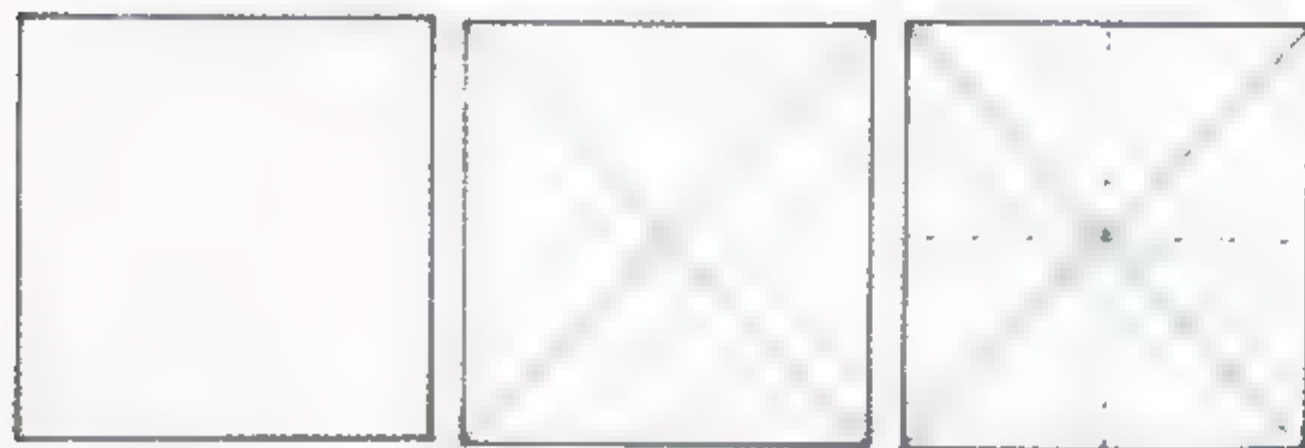No, really. We'll start by using a square to draw a circle
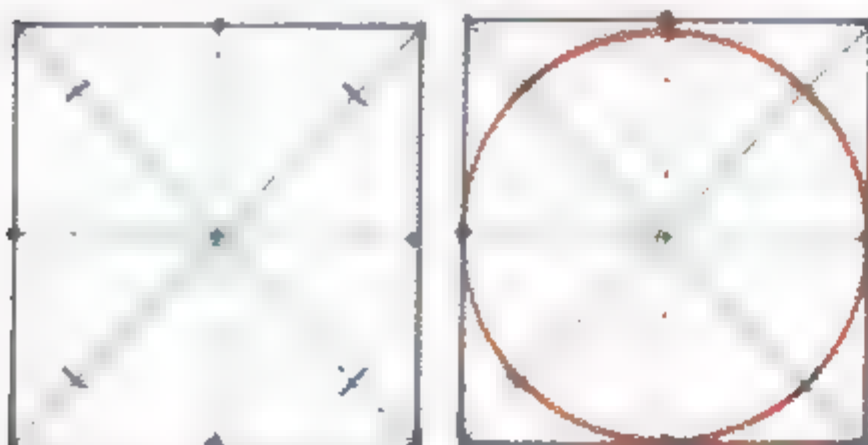

Figure 15 A

Figure 15 B

Figure 15 C

Figure 15 D

Figure 15 E

Fig 15A is a simple square. Perfect. First thing we want to do is draw diagonal lines to opposite corners, making a big "X" across the square, as in Fig 15B. Using the center, or intersection, of that "X" we draw another set of lines through the square; check out Fig 15C. In Fig.15D we determine the points that will define our circle. Where each line of Fig 15C touches a side of the square is a point. Moving from the center of the square (where all the lines intersect) towards the corners, make a mark at about two-thirds of the way. Once you have these eight points set it's just a matter of connecting them with a curved line, and you have your circle (Fig 15E)! When drawing your curved lines, try using a French Curve to help you out. This will be especially important in drawing the circle in perspective.

So that's the circle in the flat square. Let's add some perspective to it!
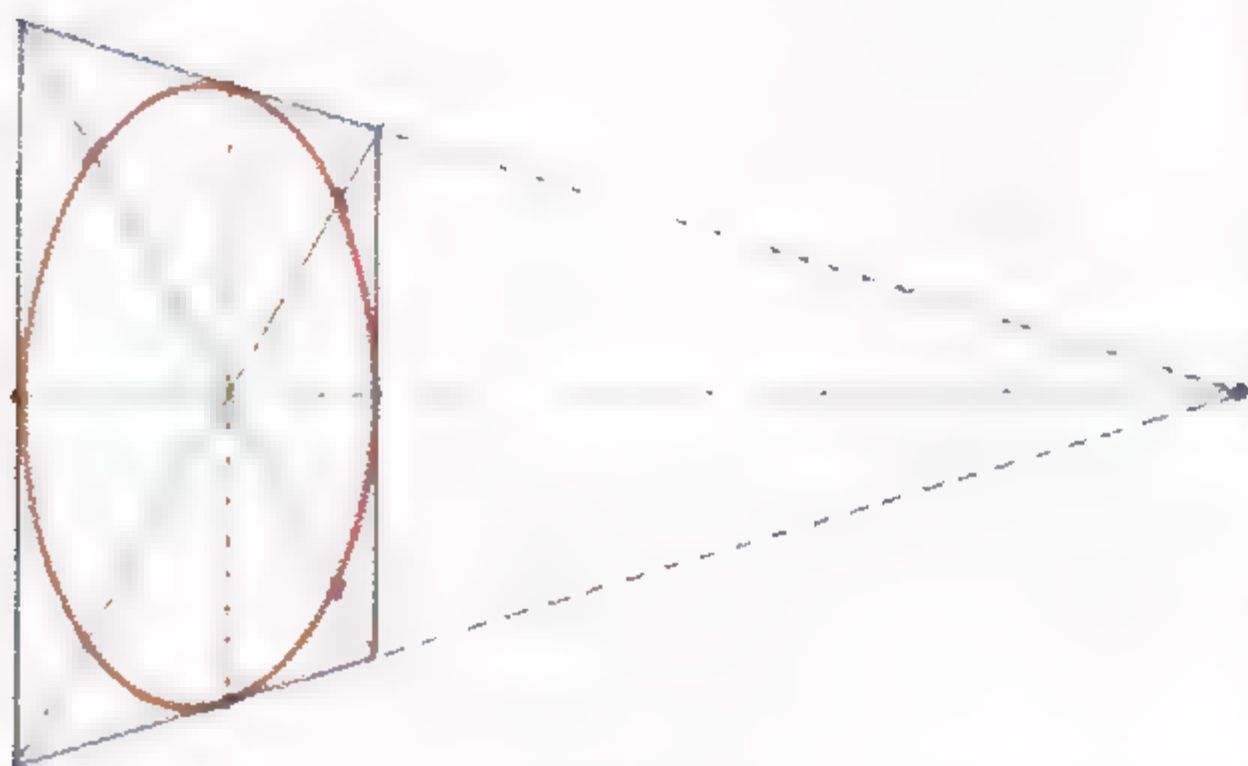
Figure 16

Fig 16 shows us a square in one point perspective. As you can see, the square was divided using the same method in Figs 15A-E. Take note that the broken line dividing the square in half "horizontally" reacts to the vanishing point that defines the top and bottom of the square. This has to happen so the square is divided equally in perspective. The orange circle inside the square is no longer a circle; it's been warped a little and can now be called an ellipse.

Let's say we need to give this ellipse a little depth, or thickness. After all, we are trying to create the illusion of three-dimensional space, right? Taking what we started in Fig 17, let's turn that square into a cube by adding a second vanishing point. On the newly constructed side of the cube that faces the ellipse we have already drawn, construct another ellipse (Fig.18)...remember that since you are working on sides that are parallel to each other (think about it as the front and back of the cube), those horizontal lines still need to react to the original (right side) vanishing point. It's the top and bottom of this new cylinder that will react to the vanishing point on the left (Fig 19).
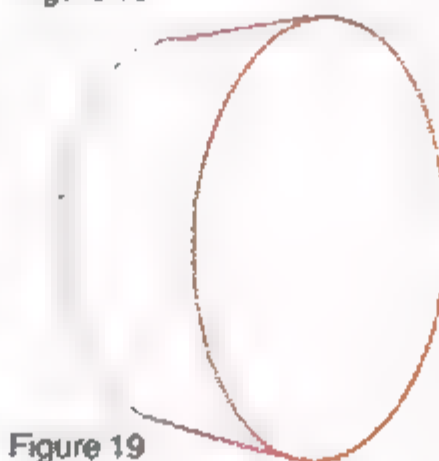

Figure 17

Figure 18

Figure 19

What if you want to make a ring, or a circle with a hole in it? Fig.20 shows us that all we need to do is make another, smaller square inside of the bigger one. Then we just construct a small ellipse inside the small square, and you have a circle with a hole in it that is in perspective.
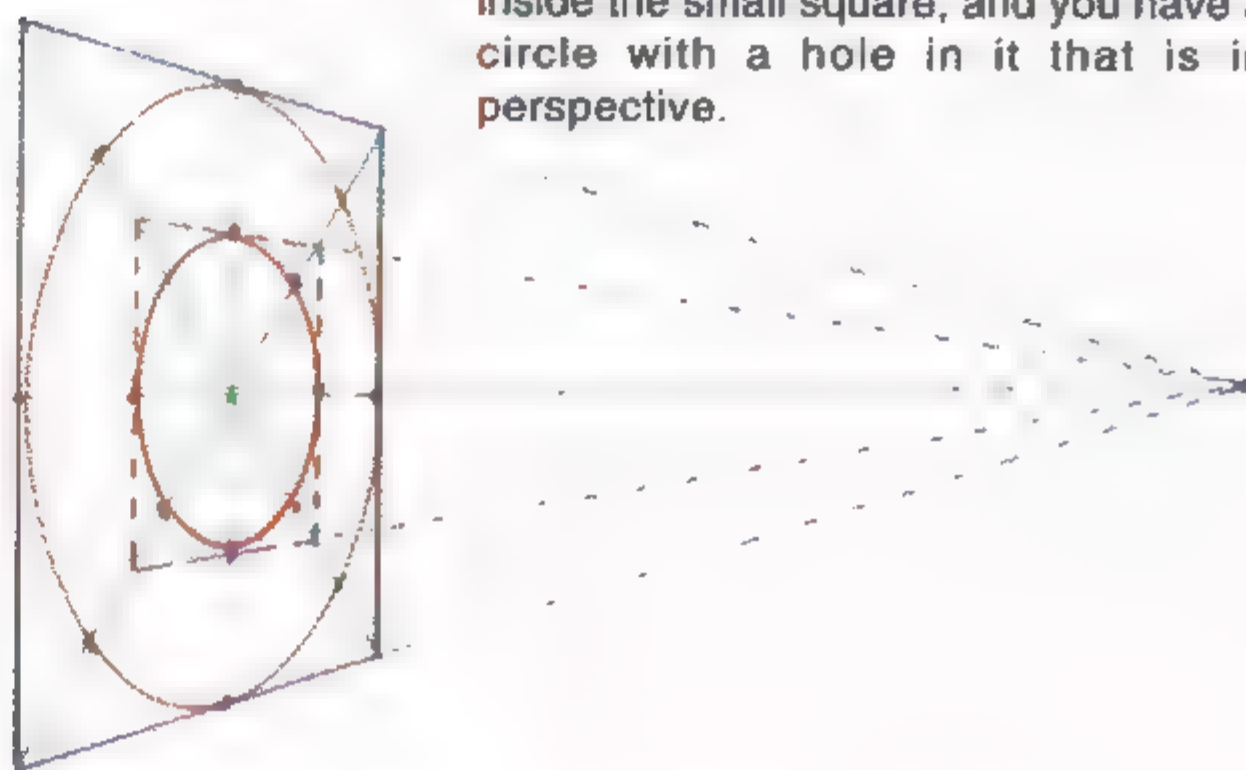

Figure 20

Let's apply all of this to our super-hero headquarters. In the HQ, there is a round meeting table with a monitor tree. As we've learned, the first thing we should do is construct our squares in perspective. Fig 21 shows us that the angles on those squares are pretty tight, resulting in very narrow rectangles. This really doesn't change anything. Our procedure will still be the same, and all the same rules will apply.
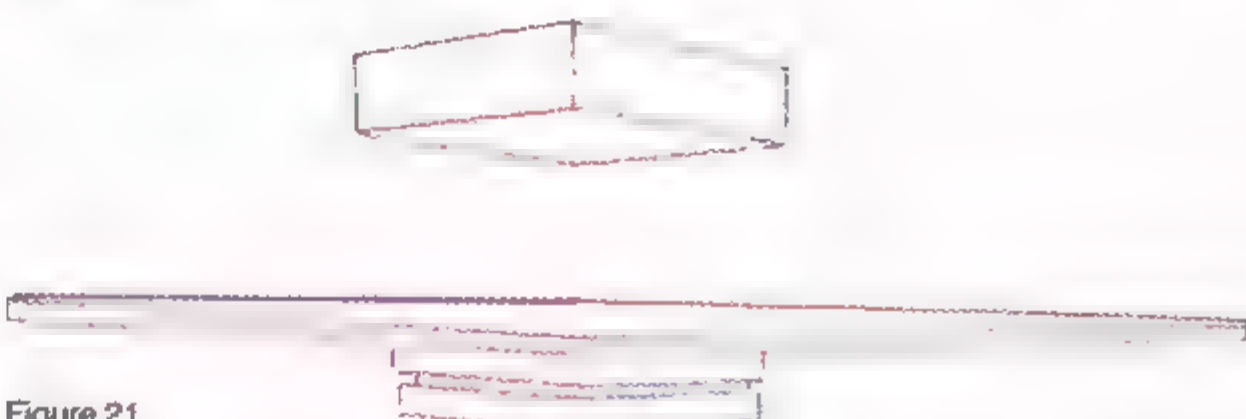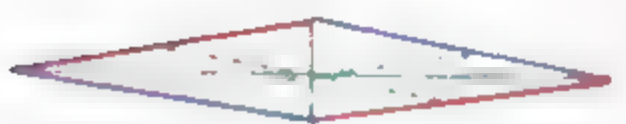

Figure 21

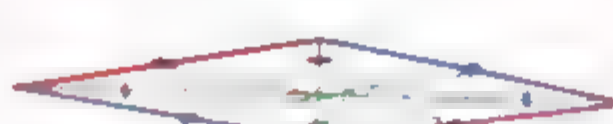Figure 22 A

Figure 22 B

Figure 22 C

Figure 22 D

Figure 22 E

Take a look at Figs.22 A-E if you don't believe me. We just end up with very long, short ellipses that still represent circles in perspective.

Earlier I mentioned the french curve as a useful tool when drawing your ellipses. Another useful tool is the elliptical template. Most elliptical templates are pieces of plastic with different size ellipses cut into them, and you can usually find them in any size and at just about any angle you need them – from almost circular, to squished almost flat. Once you have your square or rectangle set up in perspective, you can use your elliptical template to find the right ellipse for the object you have drawn. This will save you a little time when you are sweating over deadlines, and it will make your inker's life a little less frustrating too.

Whew! Okay, take a breath and stand up to stretch, 'cause we're not done yet!

Equidistant Spacing

As I am sure you have noticed, when you put something in perspective the shape of the object changes. When this occurs the center of the object also moves...think back to the circles and ellipses.

Let's say that we want to divide an object into several equal parts, like the top of our super-hero headquarters' wall that is immediately below the skylight. How would we do that?

In Fig 23 A we have a rectangle in perspective. I want to divide this rectangle into equal parts, so my first step is to find the center of the rectangle. Just as we did with constructing an ellipse, I draw lines to opposite corners. Where those lines intersect is the center of my rectangle. Through that center point, I draw a vertical line.
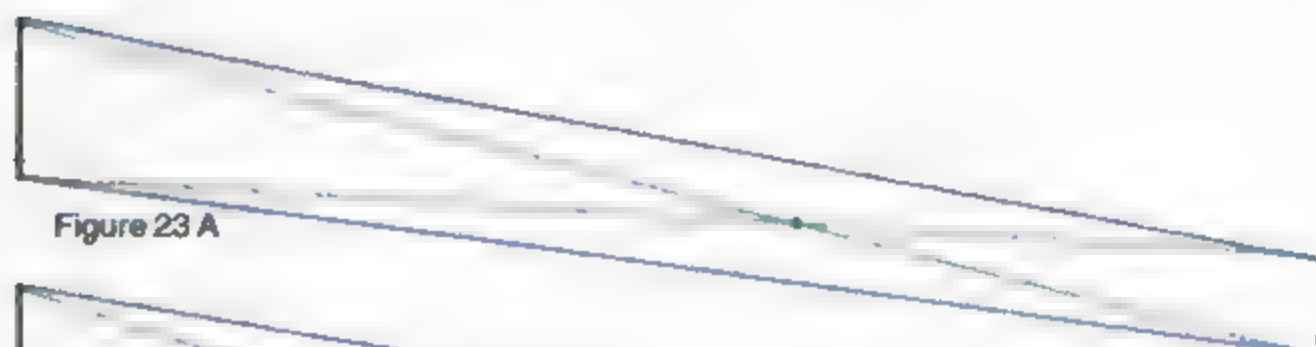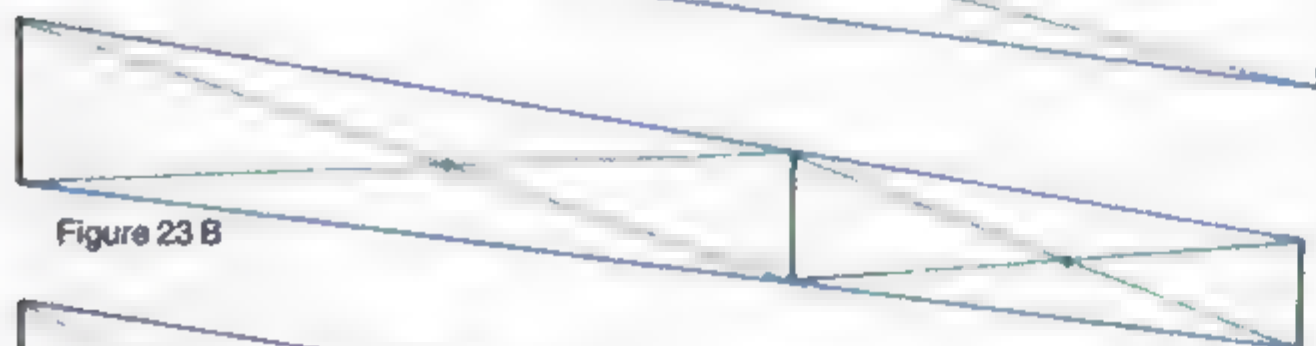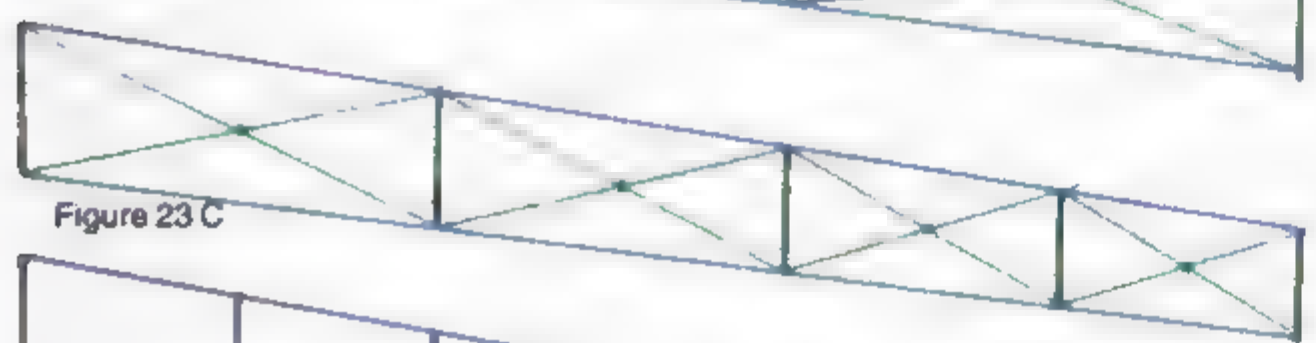

Figure 23 A

Figure 23 B

Figure 23 C

Figure 23 D

Now my rectangle is divided into two equal parts. It may not look like it, but remember, it's in perspective. I still need more divisions to go all the way along the wall; what do you think we should do now?

It's really pretty simple. In each new rectangle you make (we have two now, right?) you repeat the same procedure we just did, until you have as many "sub-divisions" as you want. Figs.23 B-D shows us this. See how Fig 23 B has "x"s through each of its two new sections, and then Fig.23 C has the resulting four sections divided even further, until we end up with eight equal sections in Fig. 23 D.

What about a rectangle that is vertical? Good thing you asked, otherwise Figs.24 A-F would be pretty useless! Starting with a basic one point perspective of a rectangle in Fig 24A, we then make our "x" (Fig.24B) to find the rectangle's center. Again, think back to the construction of ellipses...for this type of perspective shot, the "horizontal" lines have to react to the vanishing point. So when you draw your line through the center point created by the "x," make sure that you line it up with the appropriate vanishing point.
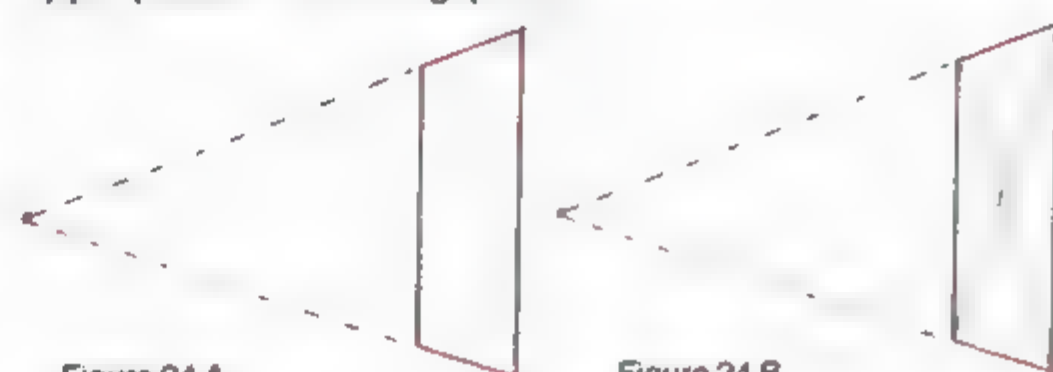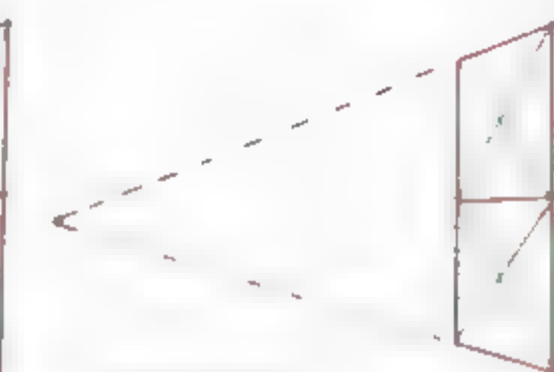

Figure 24 A

Figure 24 B

Figure 24 C

Figure 24 D

More "x"s in Fig 24 D will give us the center of the two new shapes, and those shapes are divided equally (using the vanishing point) in Fig 24 E. We have the result in Fig 24 F... which reminds me of the side of a building...so let's go ahead and turn that into one side of a building, and construct the other side.
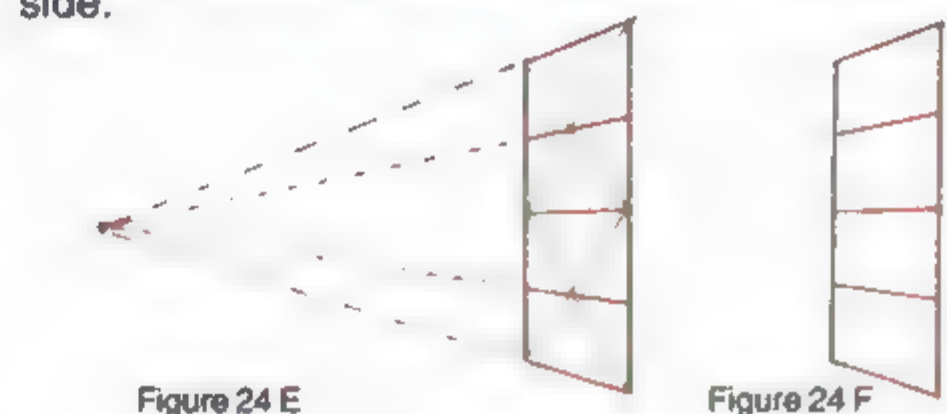

Figure 24 E

Figure 24 F

If this is going to be a building, we've already cut some of our workload down by dividing one side equally. Look at Fig.25. Where are the "x"s dividing that new blue side? Well, we don't really need them. The corner of the building facing us is going to help us out. Where the red perspective lines of the first side touch the corner of the building, they automatically divide the vertical line equally. So all we need to do is line up each of those points with the other vanishing point, and presto, a new equally divided side!
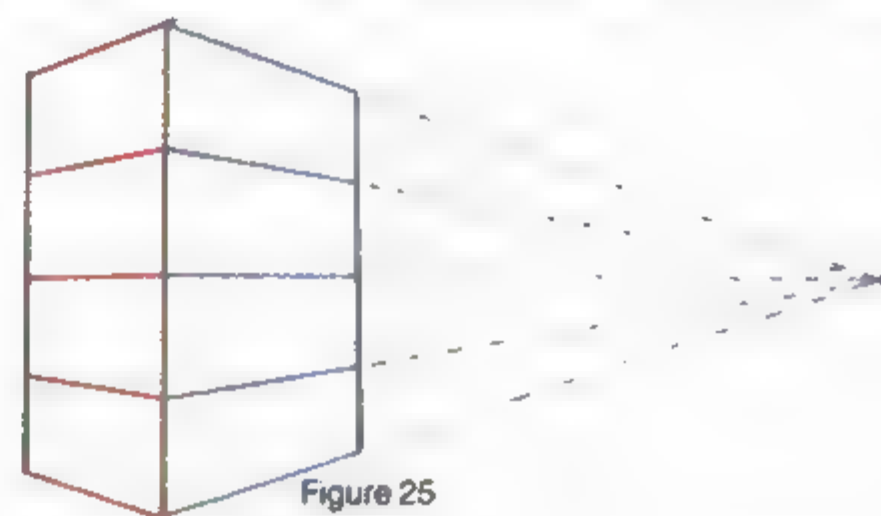

Figure 25

A few light bulbs may be turning on right now...That's right, another way to divide up your space is to make equidistant marks along a specific line, or side, (in this case, the line that represents the corner of the building facing us) and simply drawing lines from both vanishing points to meet those marks. Very similar to how we created the grid on the floor of our HQ.

After that, you need to put in windows, or any decorative elements, and you can divide up each of your floors like we did back in Figs.23A-D.

So what's next?

Objects with Different Vanishing Points

Huh? Didn't we talk about that with the staircase? Yes, but what we are going to talk about now are objects in our HQ that have different vanishing points that are *still on the same horizon line!*

What? I thought this was a two-point perspective drawing? How can there be more than two points?!
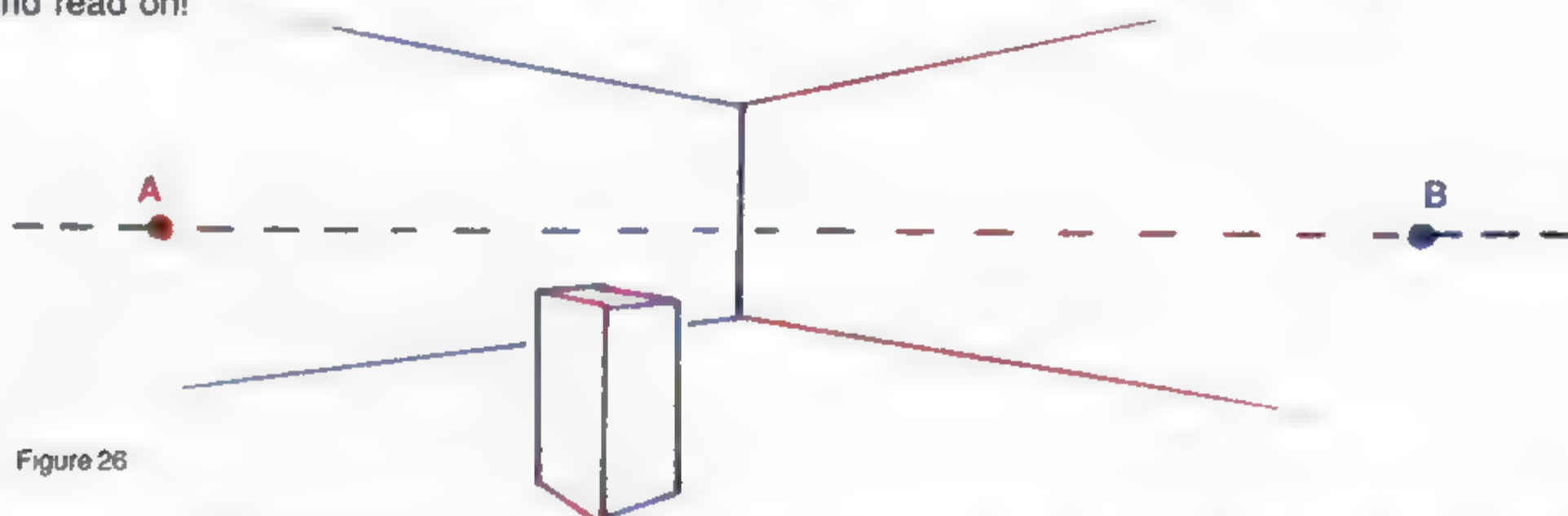
Remain calm, and read on!

Figure 26

Fig 26 is a basic two point perspective shot of the corner of a room. Within this room is an object, and as you can see, this object reacts to the same vanishing points that describe the walls of the room.

Look around your room, or office, or wherever...there's bound to be some piece of furniture or something that is not parallel to the sides of the room, something that is turned at an angle. Let's throw an item like that into the room in Fig.26.
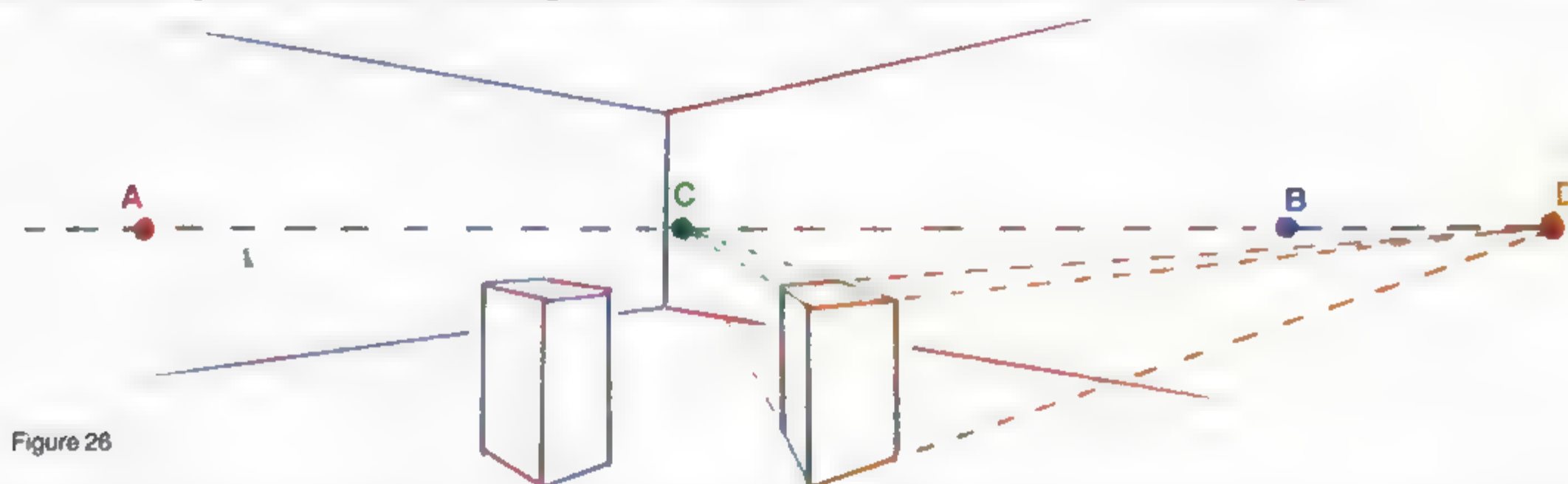

Figure 26

All right, now we have Fig 27. Our room is still the same, the first object is still the same, but that new one is a little different - yet it still appears to fit in the room. It's believable in that space. This new object is turned at a different angle, but it still has to obey perspective, therefore it has its own vanishing points C and D.

As you can see, those vanishing points are on the same horizon line that the rest of the drawing relates to. This is what keeps the object believably in that space.

If you wanted to, you could have as many objects in the room as you wanted and they could each be turned at different angles, and be different sizes, but as long as you remember that each object's vanishing points remain on the same horizon line as everything else, you will be in good shape!

In our super-hero headquarters there a few objects that don't line up with the two points that define everything else in the drawing. I'm talking about the screens on the monitor tree in the center and a computer bank on the right. Let's take a look at those objects, starting with Fig.28. Here you can see that *each* of those items has its own *set of two* vanishing points, and all those vanishing points are on the same horizon line...see, I wouldn't lie to you!

Could there possibly be anything else...? *Sure!* There's a lot more!

But I think we've covered enough for the moment; this should give you plenty to think about and practice right now. Try taking everything we've gone over here, and create some new floorplans for your favorite character's command crib. So that's it for now! Thanks for your time!!

AARON HÜBRICH'S
DIGITAL COLORS

PhotoShop 7:
How It Can Help You with Coloring Comics

Since Photoshop 7 has been out for a bit, I'd like to introduce to you why this version can be extremely useful to anyone coloring comics. I highly recommend that you get the upgrade for one reason: The new brush options. They let you simulate just about any kind of brush, board, canvas, and even grass! Let's get started now creating our brushes...

Figure 1

Figure 1.5

Open up Photoshop 7 and click on any brush you want (Fig.1). You can load the preset brushes or make one yourself (Fig. 1.5).

Figure 2

Figure 3

The most powerful aspect of these new brushes is how to customize each one. Go to the top right hand side of the screen and click on the Brushes Tab. I would encourage you to mess around with all the options listed on the left side of the menu, but we'll focus on the Texture tab. This option allows you to create those nice brush stroke effects within Photoshop...you may never have to go out and buy canvas or paint again (Fig. 2)!

Within this window, select what type of texture you want to serve as your background. In this example, I have selected "Extra Heavy Canvas" (Fig. 3). There are many other examples to experiment with, so don't hesitate to try them all!

Figure 4

(Fig.4) I've set up my new brush with my settings to make it feel like canvas with oil paints (of course)...

Figure 5

After you have your brush set up exactly how you like it, go to the button in the top right hand corner of your Brush Preset Picker. Click on the button in the top right hand corner of that window and select New Brush. Give your new brush a name – and whammo! You now have your very own custom brush you can go back to with exactly the settings you want. I would suggest spending some time setting up brushes that you know will work for you every time (Fig. 5).

Now you can create a brush for just about any situation that comes up...fields of grass, metallic surfaces, putrid skin burns, shiny leather – you get the picture? Well what are you waiting for?! Go get that upgrade right now! And if you already have it, we want to see what you did with those fantastic brushes. Drop on in at the Blue Line Pro Message Board and post your stuff, or send us cool printed pieces. Either way, we want to see how you're doing with your computer coloring.
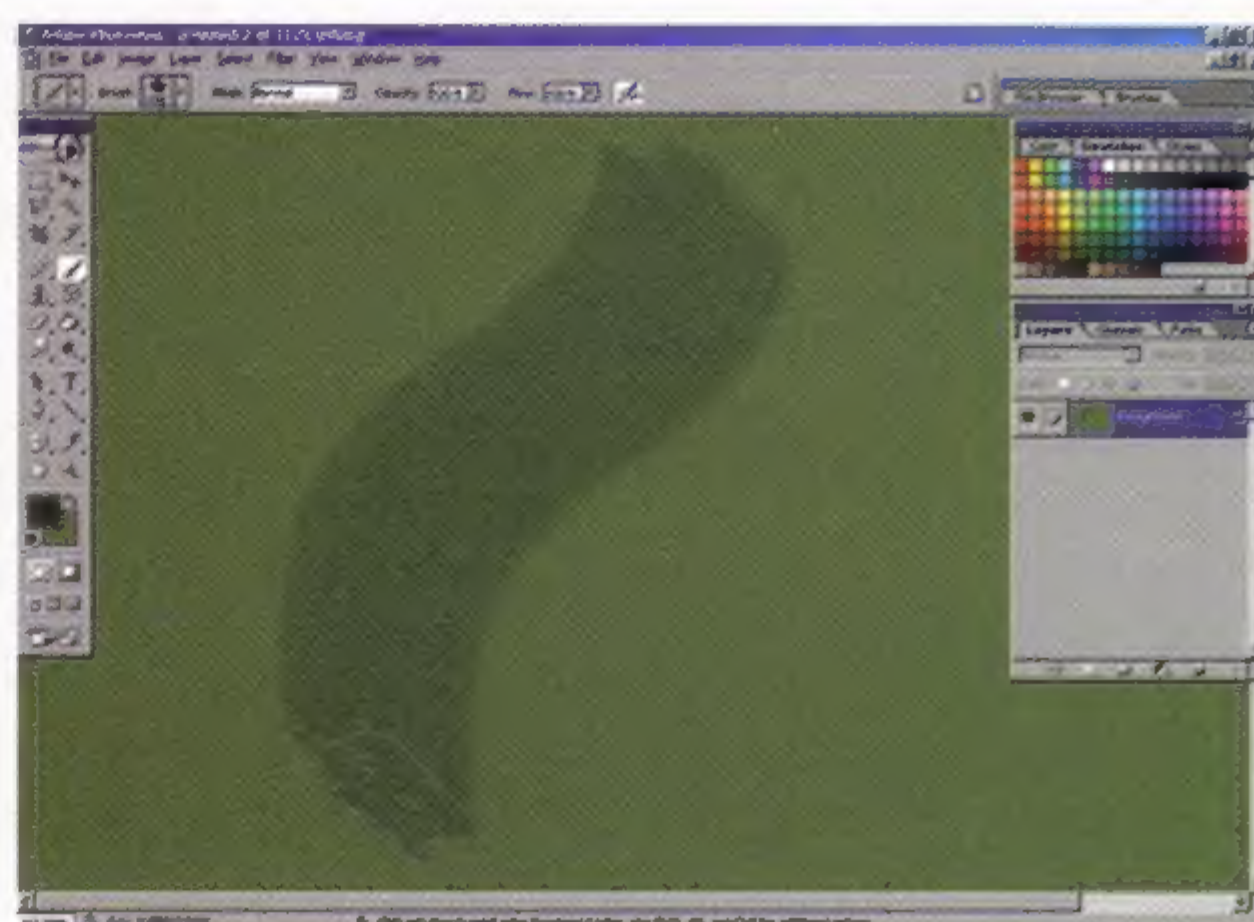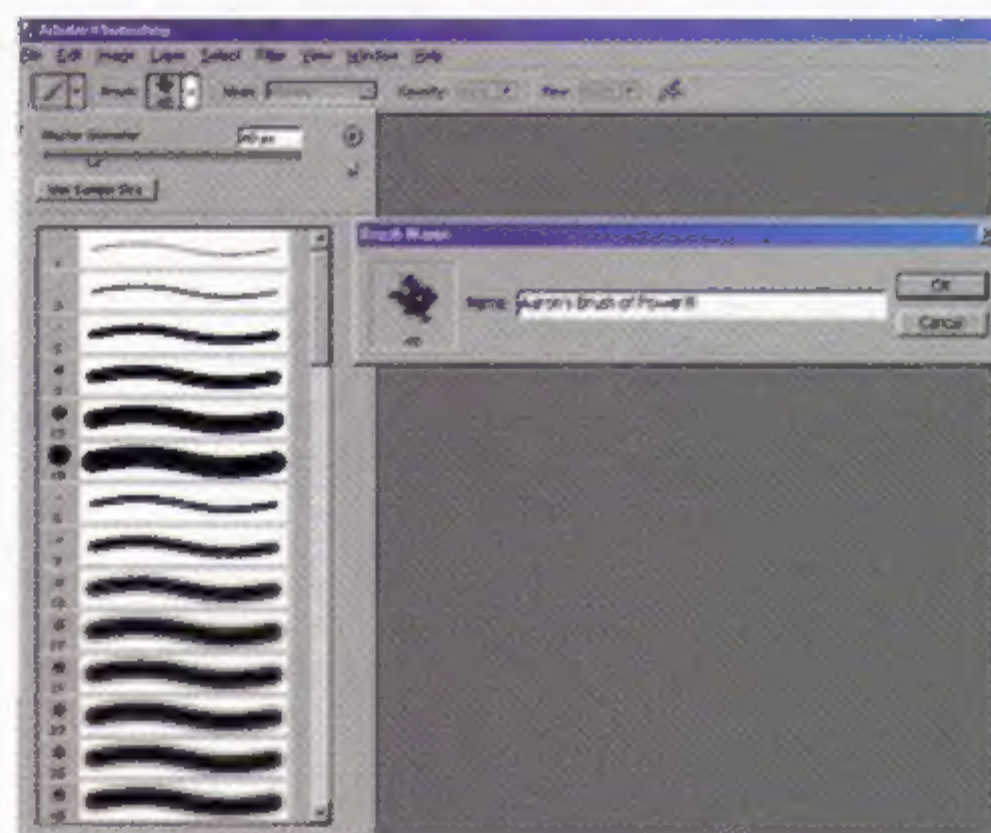
Until next time...Happy coloring!

Bob Hickey
Along with his duties as publisher of Sketch Magazine, he is the creative force behind Blood & Roses, StormQuest, and Tempered Steele. He currently has a new Blood and Roses project in the works along with his new creator owned series Race Danger, both will be appearing at BLP Comics.
Bob is one of the co-founders of Blue Line Productions.
He can be reached at bobh@bluelinepro.com
www.bluelinepro.com

Flint Henry
WizKids/Mage Knight, Ral Partha, and other companies utilize the fantastical concepts pulsating from his Nyarlathopean pencil point – icing on the appendage after more than a decade of delineating disturbed, dark, and violent characters such as Grimjack, Lawdog, Manbat, and the occasional demonic Batman.

Chuck Dixon
With the successful launch of Way of the Rat hard on the heels of his commandeering Sigil and Crux, this new transplant becomes a key chronicler at CrossGeneration Comics. He'll continue to bring his respected, popular, and prolific scribing to bear in expanding the excitement of the CrossGen canon!

M² a.k.a. **Mike Maydak**
M² has now been working for Blue Line Pro for the past four years. In that time, he has learned much from the experienced crew at Sketch about the comic industry and has mastered the technique of "getting lunch". He often contributes in the form of graphic design, writing, and editorial work.

Bill Baker
Bill Baker has established himself as one of the preeminent interviewers in the comics journalism community. After getting his start as a reporter on a now-defunct website, he graduated to doing both long and short form interviews for two of the best known comic book sites on the web, Comic Book Resources and Wizard World. This lead to his articles and interviews appearing in print magazines, including Comic Book Marketplace and Comic Buyers' Guide, as well as Fantastic Visions: The Art of Matt Busch, by Avatar Press in 2001.

Mitch Byrd
Mitch's pencils have wowed everyone, from the sci-fi super-hero Guy Gardner crowd to the extreme-evisceration indulgers of Verotik comics.
Enjoy his attractive, lighthearted art with our Sketch exclusives.

Beau Smith
Beau created and writes Parts Unknown and Primate, currently at Image Comics. He's scripted The Undertaker for Chaos Comics, The Tenth, Wynonna Earp, Spawn: Book Of Souls, Wolverine/Shi, Batman/Wildcat and several Star Wars stories for Dark Horse, as well as the upcoming Xena/Wonder Woman crossover.
See more of Beau at www.flyingfistranch.com

Tom Bierbaum
Tom, with wife Mary, has scripted such comics as Legion of Super-Heroes and The Heckler for DC Comics, Xena and Return to Jurassic Park for Topps Comics, Star for Image Comics and Dead Kid Adventures, a creator owned project by Knight Press.

Aaron Hübrich
Aaron was going to be the next great fantasy painter, but something caught his eye in college - comics! From then on he never looked back, focusing on making an impact on the the comic book industry. In the 90's he learned a lot by self publishing, and working for several larger publishers. A few years ago he became interested in digital coloring, and is now contributing his skills to major publishers.
Aaron has authored a book showing the "step by step" process on how to make comic books come to life using Photoshop. If you were ever interested in how to color for comics, then you really need to check out this book!

Pat Quinn
Pat has drawn comics for several publishers. His work includes Gen 13, Writer's Bloc Annual, Necrotic, and Image Introduces...Cryptopia. Pat has also illustrated several projects for Idea and Design Works, including Bionicle trading cards and the comic adaptation of Origin's Ultima video game, as well as a Green Lantern story for DC Comics.

Chris Dreier
Chris started his inking career in late 1993 with Riot Gear, from Triumphant comics. He's since worked with Now Comics, Antarctic Press, Caliber Comics and Dreamsmith Studios. Currently he's working on Angel from Dark Horse Comics. In his spare time he works on his own comic book projects. Contact Chris at dryinks@msn.com.

Dan Davis
Dan is a freelance artist/writer, having inked many characters and books at DC comics over the years including the recent Justice League Animated #1 that was chosen as DC's contribution for Free Comics Day. Other recent titles include Harley Quinn, Green Lantern, and Secret Origins. He has penciled and inked The Phantom for the Swedish publisher Egmont, and contributes occasional writing and art to the Alley Oop comic strip feature.

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